

# CJR

COLUMBIA  
JOURNALISM  
REVIEW

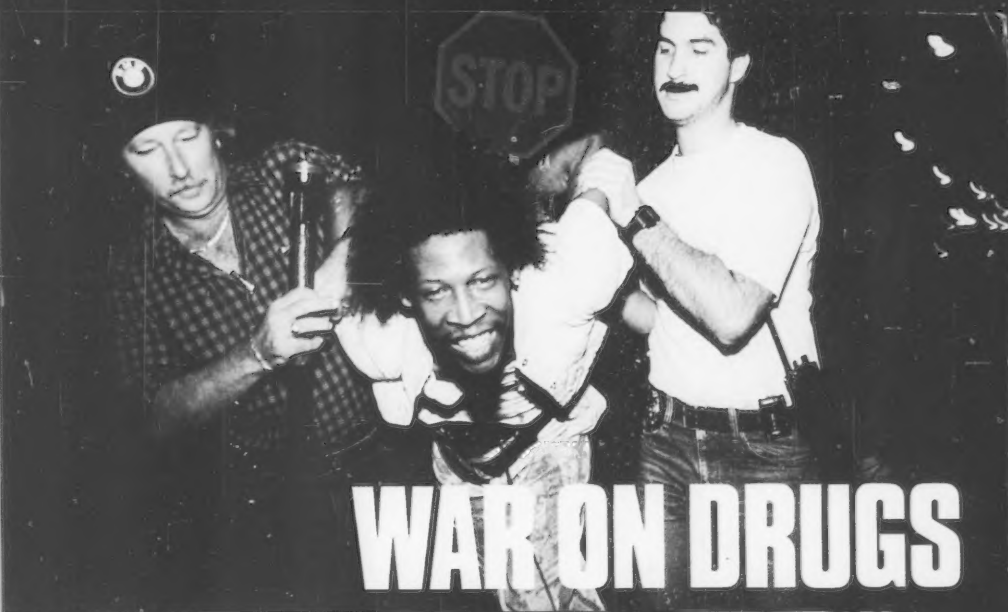
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On being  
a good soldier

Public TV:  
The furor over  
funding

Why young  
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are leaving the  
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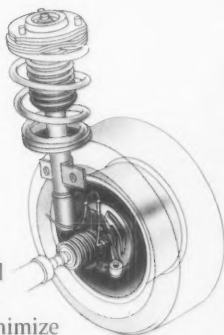


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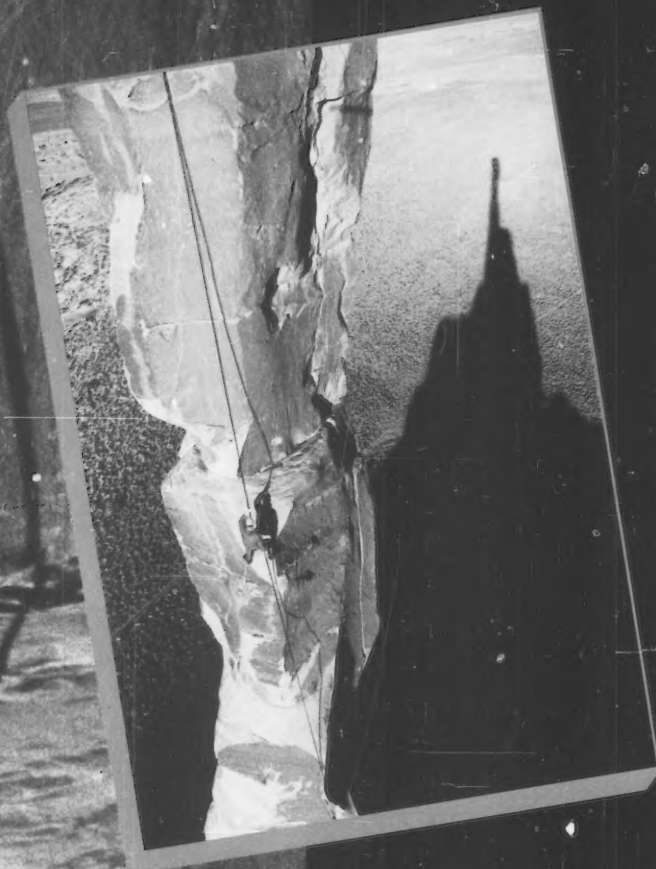
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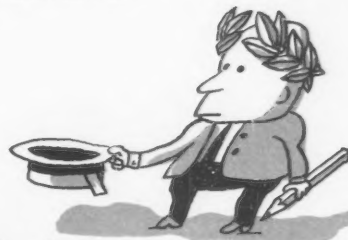
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## THE PICTURES THAT GOT AWAY

◆  
KTIV THOUGHT IT HAD EXCLUSIVE  
FOOTAGE OF A PLANE CRASH

◆  
Video rights in the satellite age

Scenes of a jetliner tumbling across an Iowa cornfield stunned television news viewers across the nation last July 19, especially when they learned that more than 180 people survived the flaming crash.

One of the footnotes to this news event is the history of that video. Reporter/photographer Dave Boxum of Sioux City's KTIV got the only unobstructed shot of the United Airlines DC-10 as it hit the ground. News director Van Carter wanted to keep the video exclusively for KTIV and its network, NBC. Instead, it wound up on virtually every station in the nation, including KTIV's competitor, KCAU-TV, an ABC affiliate. KCAU didn't even credit KTIV, as normal TV etiquette requires. What happened?

News director Van Carter says that when NBC News executives heard about the tape, late on the 19th, they were eager to air it on a 5:30 P.M. news update on the West Coast. KTIV had no facilities to transmit video via satellite, but WOWT-TV of Omaha, another NBC affiliate, had sent up a satellite truck. Normally the truck would have transmitted on an NBC channel, but the necessary equipment was out of service. So the technicians used a channel owned by Conus, the satellite newsgathering and distributing cooperative that serves 133 local stations around the country.

When the Sioux City video showed up on satellite receivers, many news operations, hungry for images of the crash, captured the pictures with their videotape recorders. "Once it gets up there in the stars," says WOWT news director Steve Murphy, "everybody cherry-picks it."

Conus spokesman Steve Blum says that as far as his organization's members are concerned, there was no "cherry-picking" because Conus had permission to use the video before the satellite feed. KTIV's Carter says no such permission was given, and if Conus had asked, he'd have refused. "I am the person with the authority to release the video, and I was not aware that it was being fed by Conus until after the fact," he says. Blum says that once Conus employees saw the pictures and realized the value of the video — after they'd bounced it off the satellite — they called KTIV to confirm their understanding. The executive Conus eventually reached at KTIV, he says, agreed to grant permission to use the tape for a fee.

Carter agrees that he made such a deal with Conus, but not until forty-five minutes after the feed, when it was "too late

to save the tape as exclusive." He then agreed with some stations and networks, including ABC, to sell rights to use the video for \$300. Carter says his deal with ABC specifically excluded KCAU, his main Sioux City competitor. Ken Gullette, KCAU's news director, concedes that ABC told him about the exclusion, but without insisting that he abide by it. "I'd have been in the position of being the only affiliate in the country not using it," he says. The video also showed up on CBS, uncredited, Carter says, although "I never heard from them." CBS has said it obtained permission. (Carter has since rejected a CBS check for \$185 for use of the video and billed the network for a higher amount, which he declined to specify.)

This is not the first case of an out-of-control video and it won't be the last, given the nature of fast-breaking news, competition, technical snafus, and overlapping loyalties between stations, networks, and such organizations as Conus. "This is typical of the situation we all face in the satellite age," says WOWT's Murphy. "Trying to protect exclusive video is going to be quite difficult. There's no answer to it." *continued*

**CRASH SCENE:** Even KTIV's chief competitor used Dave Boxum's "exclusive" shot.



KTIV/A. Tannenbaum/Sigma

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Carter says he has been thinking about an answer. Next time, he says, "I will take the five minutes necessary to put our super [the station's call letters] at the bottom. By gosh, then everybody will know where it came from."

And now that Carter has had time to think, he's had second thoughts on exclusivity when it comes to video of extreme public interest: "Should any kind of tape be exclusive in incidents like this?"

Michael Murrie

Michael Murrie teaches broadcast news at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and he is the news-technology editor for Television Broadcast magazine.

## BRAZIL: A MOGUL'S MUSCLE

IS A MEDIA EMPIRE SHAPING  
A HISTORIC ELECTION?

Globo's favorite candidate

In early August, in an ad hoc press conference in his office, Brazilian congressman José Lourenço lost his temper. "Who is it that runs this country," he shouted. "The president of the republic or Mr. Roberto Marinho?" The congressman was referring to the eighty-four-year-old owner of Globo, one of the world's largest media empires, who, at that moment, was leading a campaign to force the resignation of Brazil's finance minister, Mailson Nobrega.

Marinho's newspaper had just published a front-page article listing Nobrega's weaknesses and announcing his imminent departure. Marinho himself was busy with congressional allies, drawing up a proposal to be presented to the president, demanding the restructuring of Nobrega's ministry. He attributed his opposition to the finance minister to "inflationary policies," although some observers note that the conflict started last year after Nobrega

blocked one of Marinho's financial maneuvers. More important, according to several Brazilian journalists and politicians, Marinho was trying to push the government into implementing draconian austerity measures before the next presidential election, so that the candidate he favored would not be forced to engage in such unpopular measures once in office. "But Nobrega refused to bend to Globo and Marinho," explained congressman Lourenço, who is the leader of a major center-right political party in Brazil.

Making and breaking politicians is nothing new to Roberto Marinho, owner of Rede Globo—the fourth largest commercial television network in the world—as well as one of Brazil's largest newspapers, *O Globo*. He dominates the publishing, recording, and radio industries, and he has branched out into real estate and fashion.

Rede Globo, especially, wields enormous influence over the daily lives of Brazilians. It usually commands 70 percent of the television audience in a country of 140 million; Brazil's three other national networks, while steadily growing, are small by comparison. Globo's nightly soap operas are watched even in the most remote corners of the country and are the main topic of conversation at work, in restaurants, and at home. Brazilian filmmakers and playwrights have learned that if they don't include

Globo stars in their productions, they risk failure. And Globo's newsgathering capability is so much larger than that of its competitors that it often has better access to government sources, tips, and information.

This year Rede Globo looms particularly large. Brazil's first direct presidential elections since 1960—

“There will never be democracy in Brazil while there are forces like Globo”

democracy was put on hold in the 1964 military coup—are scheduled for November 15, with a two-candidate runoff in December. This election marks many firsts—the first time illiterates and sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds will exercise their newly won right to vote; the first election with televised debates; the first presidential campaign to have continuous updated opinion polls that are tele-

cast regularly; and the first to allow free air time to every candidate whose party has a presence in the congress. All of this helps make television, for the first time in Brazil, a truly powerful force in a national political campaign.

Up until March the two leading presidential candidates were Leonel Brizola, an old populist from the pre-dictatorship years and an old enemy of Marinho's, and Luis Inácio da Silva (known as "Lula"), a young union leader advocating radical economic and political re-



**TV POWER:** In Brazil's first presidential election in twenty years, leading candidate Fernando Collor de Mello (above) gets highly favorable coverage from the powerful Rede Globo network, owned by kingmaker Roberto Marinho (right).



left: Reuters/Bettmann right: Abril Imagens/Antonio Ribeiro





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## CHRONICLE

form. Both men have vowed that, should they win, they will take on Globo and Marinho. Brizola vows to "destroy" Marinho's empire; Lula talks of "democratizing" the media. "There will never be democracy while there are forces like Globo," he says.

There seemed to be no other viable candidate from the center or right, until the appearance of Fernando Collor de Mello. He is the governor of Alagoas, one of the smallest states in Brazil, located in the impoverished, largely rural northeast.

Collor, handsome and rich, is campaigning on an uncomplicated anticorruption, antiwaste platform that seems designed to offend no one. More important, he has the advantage of being young and unknown in an election largely dominated by aging candidates whom the public associates with corruption and incompetence.

Not only does Collor seem made for TV, he also apparently has the blessing of Marinho's Rede Globo. Before his emergence last spring, the leading candidates were mostly ignored or given consistently unfavorable coverage on Globo. Collor, however, began to appear on the network's news shows nightly, presented as a fresh candidate with new ideas. Some of Globo's entertainers even began mentioning their approval of the candidate during their televised acts. Almost every night Globo presented yet another poll including detailed graphs comparing Collor's progress with that of the other candidates. An election analyst on the smaller Manchete network commented that when viewers see Collor's graph lines going up every night and the others going down, they become "less willing to vote for someone else." By May, Collor was leading in the polls, a lead that has shrunk but remained substantial as of mid-October.

Once Globo latched onto Collor, its coverage of the other candidates dried up. Collor's travels inside and outside Brazil were covered lavishly; Brizola's meetings with government leaders from throughout Latin America and Lula's trips to Europe and the U.S. were barely covered. When Lula received death threats from a right-wing vigilante group, most of the press duly reported the story. Globo was silent.

Collor's popularity took its biggest dip in mid-July, however, after the first two televised debates, which were sponsored by smaller networks. Twelve candidates appeared in heated four-hour free-for-alls; Collor did not. He passed up a third debate in August, saying he would refuse to accept invitations to any debates until before the December runoff, which will pit the two leading candidates against each other.

Collor declined to explain his decision not to debate. His critics, who claim he has more style than substance, charge that he fears exposing his lack of depth, while his admirers defend the no-debates strategy as a sign of confidence. But the refusal cost him nearly ten percentage points in the polls. Meanwhile, criticism of Globo's campaign coverage began to mount, and observers say that it began to improve noticeably after Brizola blasted the network in a September 8 interview — on Globo. A few days later, Marinho announced that Globo would sponsor presidential debates.

Collor's rivals are hoping that television, which rocketed him to the top,

will also bring him down, either when he does finally debate or when Brazil's free-air-time law begins to distribute television's power more equitably. That law gives most of the candidates, including Collor, ten minutes each on all the networks, every day for sixty days before the election. After the first nine days, in fact, Collor once again dropped ten percentage points.

Free air time has dramatically affected some municipal and state elections since it was introduced in 1982. The last major surprise was in last year's São Paulo mayoralty race between right-winger Paulo Maluf and radical socialist Luiza Erundina. Before the free spots began to be aired, Maluf was leading with a 28 percent spread. Erundina, by making effective use of her free air time, closed the gap and won by 6 percent. Now running for president, Maluf has hired a pair of \$15,000 per month media consultants to improve his manner and appearance — another first for Brazil.

Sandra H. Necchi

Sandra H. Necchi, who was born in Brazil, is the former managing editor of NACLA Report on the Americas and a free-lance writer.

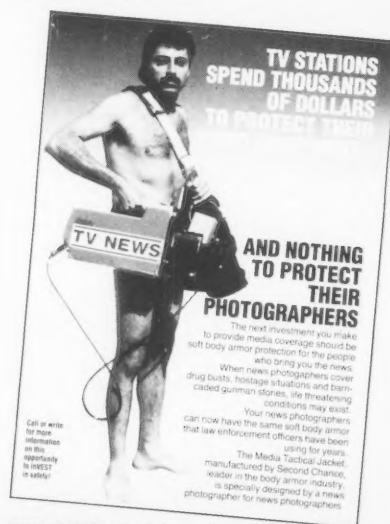
## BULLETS ON YOUR BEAT?

The up-to-date journalist and the bulletproof vest

The pen may be mightier than the sword, but what about the 9 mm semi-automatic pistol packed by the modern drug dealer? Thoughts along these lines have led to some recent newsroom investments in bulletproof vests.

*The Washington Post* bought twenty of them in the last year for its metropolitan reporters and photographers. *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *The Miami Herald*, the *Detroit Free Press*, and other large dailies have purchased vests for their photographers. Several television stations have also used them on occasion.

No incident seems to have spurred this trend. Except for two murders involving foreign politics, the only recent U.S. press shooting incident that the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press



**EXPOSED:** Rick Kamel makes his protection pitch

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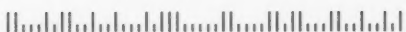
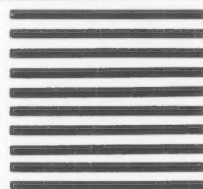
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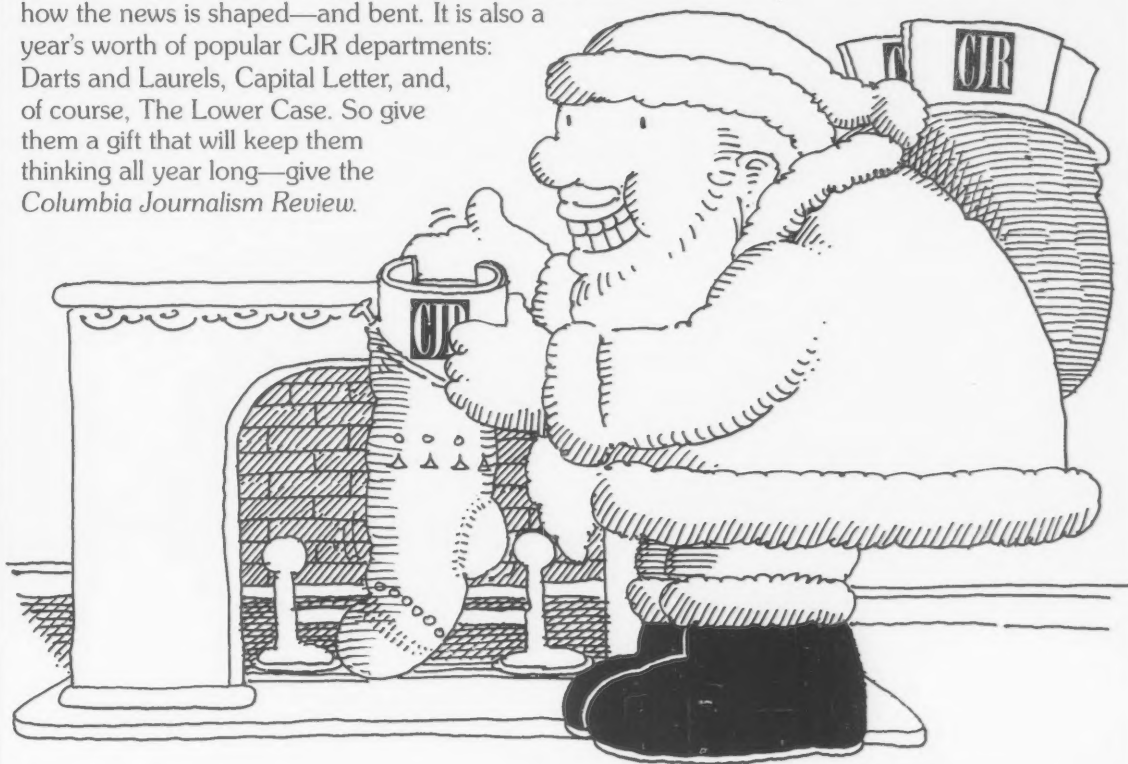
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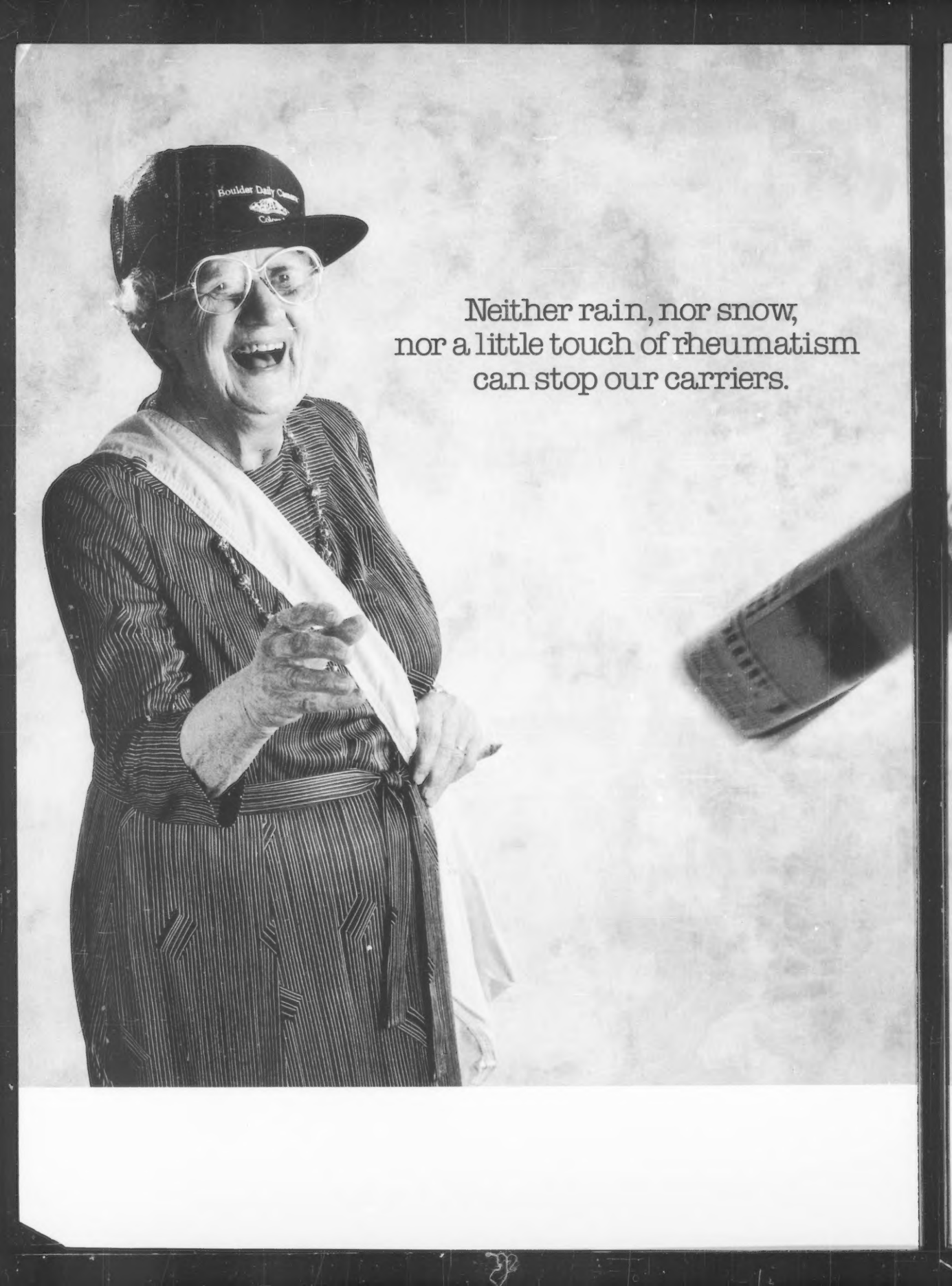
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How many deliveries do you suppose Elsa has missed in the past 13 years?

Before you answer, bear in mind that Knight-Ridder is driven by a corporate philosophy called "Customer Obsession." Which means, simply stated, that if you can't meet your customers' needs and satisfy their desires, you probably don't deserve to have them in the first place.

"Customer Obsession" led an ad messenger at *The State* in Columbia, S.C., to walk miles to deliver proofs when her car broke down. It inspired *The Miami Herald* to print a holiday season "Airport Survival Guide" instead of just reporting on airport crowds. It prompted a composing room supervisor at *The Union-Recorder* in Milledgeville, Ga., to phone the publisher for permission to stop the presses and correct an ad. At 1 a.m.

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# KNIGHT-RIDDER

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## CHRONICLE

has on record involved the Yazoo, Mississippi, *Herald*, where an editor photographing county employees — allegedly using county equipment on a private job — was hit with birdshot.

Still, the fear of being shot has spawned a small business. Rick Kamel, a photographer for WZZM-TV in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is also the designer and distributor of the Media Tactical Jacket — a bulletproof vest aimed at the journalism market. The vest is made by a company in Michigan called, grimly enough, Second Chance.

According to the advertising literature, Kamel's "tac-jac" provides protection against 12-gauge buckshot, lower-velocity handguns such as .22s, .38s, .32s, .45s, and higher-velocity .357 magnum and 9 mm handgun rounds, as well as "most" .44 magnum handgun rounds. It is covered by a nylon jacket with large pockets for film, tapes,

and notebooks, and sports a velcro flap on the back with MEDIA written in large letters, "so cops don't shoot you in the back," Kamel says. They go for between \$705 and \$980, and Kamel has sold them to television stations in Detroit, Philadelphia, and Des Moines, as well as to the *Park City News* in Dallas.

The *Washington Post* bought its vests from an Amityville, New York, company called Point Blank Body Armor Inc. at a special price of \$320 per vest. "Several reporters came in and asked for them; they said they felt vulnerable in certain situations," says Fred Barbash, a deputy metropolitan editor. "The level of violence in the city is at an all-time high. If there is anything we can do to make our reporters feel more comfortable, we will do that. It is up to them to wear them."

Linda Wheeler, a neighborhood reporter for the *Post*, says she was asked by an editor to wear a vest three years ago, when she was covering drug trafficking in the city. "I was reluctant to use one," Wheeler says. "But these

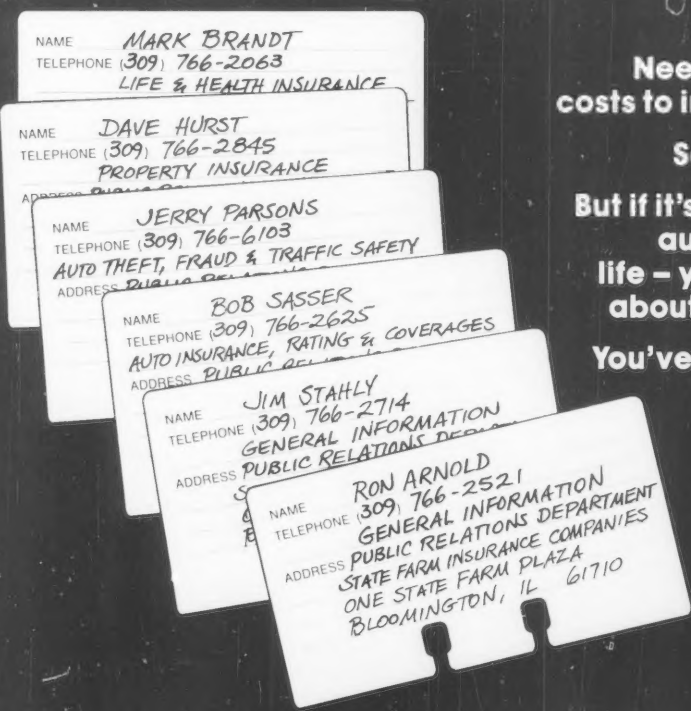
were the first crack stories and the editor insisted that I wear it." This year, when editors solicited her opinion on the vests, she discouraged their use. When you wear a vest, she says, "the message you send out is that you don't trust people. It's offensive to interview someone with one on. They don't make me comfortable."

"There was a sense initially that this was funny," says Carlos Sanchez, a *Post* police reporter. "We wore them in the newsroom, pretending to shoot each other." Sanchez keeps his vest in the trunk of his car, but he says some of the other police and housing reporters wear them regularly.

Of course, wearing a vest does not provide complete protection. As Joan Fleischman, a veteran police reporter for *The Miami Herald*, points out, "You can still get hit in the head." Another fact: soft bulletproof vests are not guaranteed against rifle fire or knives. Or swords.

Peter Fritsch

Peter Fritsch is a reporter for AP-Dow Jones, a business wire service.




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# THE BABY HUEY BOMBSHELL

◆  
A REPORTER LOSES A TAPE  
AND FINDS MUCH TROUBLE  
◆

Who owns a recorded interview?

Leslie Irwin, a twenty-six-year-old reporter for *The Phoenix Gazette*, has shown that it is possible to have the best of intentions and still betray one's sources. She was covering Arizona's biggest business story of the year — the decline and fall of American Continental Corporation, a Phoenix-based company chaired by Charles H. Keating, Jr. American Continental's \$5 billion in assets included a controversial California thrift institution, Lincoln Savings and Loan Association. The S&L was taken over by the government in April; in Sep-

## CHRONICLE

tember, Keating was slapped with a civil racketeering suit by federal bank regulators, charging that he engineered a scheme to defraud Lincoln of more than \$1 billion in federally insured deposits. Lincoln's failure could be the most expensive savings and loan bust in history, costing taxpayers as much as \$2.5 billion.

Back in May, Irwin's research had led her to one of Keating's top business associates, Conley Wolfswinkel, a Phoenix real estate developer. She discovered that Wolfswinkel held some loans from Lincoln that had been restructured when a payment was due — the interest accrued was simply rolled forward into the new loan. Irwin succeeded in getting Wolfswinkel to agree to an interview. During their conversation, Wolfswinkel confirmed that some of his Lincoln loans were structured that way.

During the interview, Irwin realized to her dismay that her tape recorder had failed — none of the conversation had been recorded. Wolfswinkel offered the use of his own machine, which, it turned



Phoenix Newspapers

**EMBARRASSED:** Leslie Irwin's interviews ended up in the hands of her subject.

out, was capable only of playing tapes, not recording them. As he fiddled with the machine he heard a snippet from an earlier interview. "I wondered if it had anything to do with me," he said later.

Wolfswinkel then obligingly fetched another, smaller recorder, snapped in a blank tape, and proceeded with the interview. Irwin was incredulous over his disclosures and anxious to get back to

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**FINDERS KEEPERS:** *Phoenix developer Conley Wolfswinkel (right) gave Irwin's tape to Charles Keating (above), who claimed it proved regulators were out to get him.*



left: Phoenix Newspapers right: Rodney Boyd

the paper to write her story. She gathered her notebooks and files and turned to leave. Wolfswinkel pointed out that she had forgotten her purse. He handed it to her and she left. As soon as she had gone, Wolfswinkel sat down and listened to the tape she had left behind in his larger desktop machine.

Wolfswinkel heard conversations about his and Keating's business affairs

and about Lincoln. Wolfswinkel, a portly man, was most outraged to hear Irwin refer to him in conversation as "Baby Huey."

He called her office and left a message to call "Baby Huey." She didn't return his call. He called again. This time he reached her and made it clear that he was very upset about the tape and did not plan to return it.

Wolfswinkel forwarded the tape to Keating and Keating's lawyer, who, in turn, sent it to the Justice Department. Wolfswinkel says he did so because the tape included conversations between Irwin and bank regulators and he suspected that those conversations might be in violation of the law.

For Keating it was a dream come true. For years he had claimed that federal regulators were out to destroy him. Soon after Lincoln had been seized, he had filed a \$150 million civil lawsuit against federal banking officials, charging that they had leaked confidential information to the press that had damaged Lincoln. Earlier, he had convinced a group of senators to intervene on his behalf with federal bank examiners. So he was delighted to make the most of the tape flap, claiming that at last he had the "smoking gun" that proved his case. His lawyer called a press conference.

This was a grave embarrassment for the *Gazette*. For the bank regulators among Irwin's sources, it meant a few uneasy days before Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation spokesman Alan Whitney announced that the regulators

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## CHRONICLE

had not revealed anything that wasn't already in the public record. And for Leslie Irwin, who did not want to discuss the affair, it has apparently meant the end of a career. On August 15 she resigned from the *Gazette* and started studying for law school entrance exams.

Friends say she felt "beaten up" by the episode, particularly by being ostracized by her peers. "She feels she's been set adrift by her colleagues for having done something no reporter worth her salt should do," says a friend. "The conduct was so embarrassing the other reporters were quick to claim that they would never do such a thing. But, in fact, anybody could leave a tape behind in someone else's office."

The *Gazette* went to court to regain possession of Irwin's tape, but the case will not be of much value as a legal precedent, says David Bodney, a Phoenix attorney who specializes in media law. Judge Stanley Z. Goodfarb, the Superior Court judge who ruled on the *Gazette's* attempt to restrain Wolfswinkel from distributing the tape, agrees. "It was all a great to-do about nothing," he says. "Everybody was claiming big con-

stitutional violations, but they were in fact there for the basest of reasons. The paper said it wanted the tape back so it could write a story. In fact, they just wanted to cover themselves. Wolfswinkel claimed a criminal wrong had occurred, but basically he was outraged that he had been referred to as Baby Huey. So I called all their bluffs."

Goodfarb ordered Wolfswinkel to return two copies of the tape to the *Gazette* and cease distributing copies for eight days — time enough for the *Gazette* to run its story. After ten days, he argued, the tapes had little value as intellectual property. But the *Gazette* never ran the story. After the editors had listened to it, they determined "there was nothing — nothing — on the tape to support Keating's point of view that he has been undermined by federal regulators," according to a column by *Gazette* managing editor Pam Johnson. Johnson said the tape contained sixteen interviews, one unrelated to this case, and that they "show clearly that Irwin was doing only what a good reporter must."

By most accounts Irwin was ahead of the pack on the American Continental story but was also considered young and relatively inexperienced for such complicated reporting about somebody like Keating, who is considered powerful and litigious, a man who loves to take on the press. Irwin and Keating "are not in the same league," says Ralph Shattuck, who publishes a newsletter about real estate foreclosures in Arizona. "It wasn't fair for the paper to put such a young journalist out by herself, in a vacuum, without a team." Irwin is known to have turned to journalists outside the *Gazette* for guidance.

Johnson says Irwin had plenty of direction at the *Gazette*. The tape controversy temporarily "threw a monkey wrench" into the *Gazette's* reporting on Keating's collapsing empire, she adds, but other reporters are picking up where Irwin left off. Irwin's interview with Wolfswinkel, Johnson says, will contribute to "ongoing coverage."

Emily Benedek

Emily Benedek is a staff writer for Arizona Trend.



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## OPINION

# THE WAR ON DRUGS AND THE ENLISTED PRESS

BY TODD GITLIN

The cold war is over, long live the drug war. War, or the sense that we are engaged in war, assures us that we have a national purpose — and the more sinister the enemy the better. Mikhail Gorbachev won't do anymore; neither will Daniel Ortega. The Japanese show promise. But, for now, we are offered the spectacle of a holy war against drugs — the latest living-room war, officially declared by President Bush on September 5, 1989.

Drugs like crack, heroin, and speed are, indisputably, a scourge, a cause of great affliction for black communities in particular. Journalists, like all citizens, have good reason to be alarmed by the scope of the nation's drug problem and the havoc wreaked by it. But at a time when the press is just starting to clear its mind of cold war attitudes, it should take care not to allow itself to be conscripted into a new holy war.

For the danger inherent in covering war is that you start thinking in terms of enemies and allies, of strategy and tactics (how much money should go to interdiction, to law enforcement, to

*Todd Gitlin, professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of The Whole World Is Watching, Inside Prime Time, and The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage, and the editor of Watching Television.*

prisons?), and, as a result, avoid searching for answers to some fundamental questions, chief among them, Why do millions of Americans — both rich and poor — turn to life-endangering drugs?

War is, of course, the health of the networks, and of their promotion departments. Scenes from the battlefield play especially well. The drug war produces bang-bang and the most vivid pictures — customers cruising the crack houses, trembling crack babies, cops going in for the bust as the hand-held camera shakes along behind. DRUGS, read the four-and-a-half-inch headline of CBS's full-page ad of September 6 pushing a week of special reports on the drug story. ONE NATION, UNDER SIEGE. "America is at war," the text declared. "And the enemy has already taken the streets."

To its credit, CBS's September 14 48 Hours program did briefly widen the policy debate to include the case of legalization (one professor in favor, three other participants opposed). While the bulk of the broadcast was spent on sting operations and other police activities, defining the drug problem as, essentially, a law-enforcement problem, it did include a report on draconian measures in Phoenix that implicitly raised civil liberties issues. Still, a mature discussion of what *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker calls the "anything goes" mentality of the drug war has been conspicuous by its absence.

Toward the bottom of the slippery slope was Connie Chung's Saturday

night special of September 30, which cashed in on the unilluminating story of one underage dealer for forty sensational minutes. The dealer, in custody, was played by an actor to prevent the youth from being identified. But when his buddies were shown hanging out on the street, one was forced to wonder, Was this the actual street? Were those real buddies? Thinking of that phantasmagorical Brooklyn street induces a kind of vertigo. Chung's report did have the inadvertent virtue of reminding us that the Bush-Bennett war is also being waged for rating points.

A secondary war frame concerns behind-the-scenes strategy: How will the war be fought? Will the drug czar be able to rally his nobles and serfs? Kibitzing of this kind was to be found in abundance on the evening news shows, on *The MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*, in the newsmagazines, and in op-ed articles. Just after President Bush's September 5 address to the nation, ABC's Peter Jennings asked only insider questions of White House correspondent Brit Hume: "How profoundly does the president feel it in his bones?" "Will he line up behind czar Bennett?" and "Will there be unqualified support?"

Occasionally, television — or at least public television — has dug into the difficult question of why more than a million Americans have become addicted to cocaine and crack. Is there some hollowness in the heart of our civilization that people stuff with drugs (as Robert Coles argued in a late August interview



**The commander in chief and the reluctant draftsman:** During President Bush's war-on-drugs speech, he displayed crack seized "across the street from the White House." The *Washington Post* later revealed that the dealer had to be lured into the president's neighborhood to make the sale.

UPI/Bettmann

with Charlayne Hunter-Gault on *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*)? Is our society, with its hunger for quick fixes, its allergy to suffering, and its addiction to fun, peculiarly susceptible to drugs (after all, the major products advertised in nineteenth-century newspapers were patent medicines)? What connection, if any, is there between black youth unemployment and destructive drug use? Are all illegal drugs equally dangerous? It used to be said that marijuana led inex-

**“Is there some hollowness in the heart of our civilization that people fill with drugs?”**

orably to heroin; now, casual pot smoking is portrayed as the way station to crack addiction. Is this so? In the current atmosphere, one can be accused of near-treason for asking such questions.

By and large in both the print and broadcast media, anything that happened more than a deadline ago — on somebody else's watch, as the saying goes — is ancient history, fit for textbooks, not news. What valid parallels can be drawn be-

tween the Prohibition era and our own time? New York State has had sixteen years' experience with draconian measures against drug sales, the so-called Rockefeller laws. With what consequences? Did they, perhaps, have the unintended consequence of bringing thousands of juveniles into the drug trade? Psychiatrist David F. Musto of Yale argues in his fascinating book *The American Disease* that for a century, as anti-drug crusades have alternated with periods of tolerance, the crusades coincided with waves of hatred of immigrant and nonwhite populations. Musto deserves more than the occasional sound bite. So do the criminologists, sociologists, penologists, and treatment specialists who have studied various aspects of the drug problem for years. A serious drug-education program *could* be conducted on television if the networks would cut back on the bang-bang and drug busts and let a few more knowledgeable talking heads actually talk.

Another way in which the media could deepen their coverage of the drug story would be to investigate how other countries deal with their drug problems. What

ever became of drug legalization in Great Britain? What can be learned from the Dutch program of decriminalizing marijuana and hashish, emphasizing treatment, and offering new needles in exchange for used needles? Why is it that in Italy, where personal use of drugs is legal, the right wing shows little interest in the issue and the anti-drug crusade is led by the left? And, crucially, if the levels of drug use and attendant violence are particularly high in the United States, why should this be?

On the September 27 *Nightline*, Jeff Greenfield asked a series of cogent questions that remain insufficiently addressed. “If drugs have triggered a sudden, huge surge in crime,” he asked, “why are national murder and robbery rates down in the last two years? Why were there fewer burglaries in New York and Los Angeles last year than there were back in 1980?” Greenfield went on to say that skeptical journalists might have asked “whether the violence of drug-dealing gangs stems from drug use itself or from the battle to protect the huge profits of dealing in illegal drugs. They might have asked whether drugs are a cause of crime or a symptom of deeper social pathologies.”

The skepticism Greenfield called for is certainly required when government agencies start tossing out figures for public consumption. How many victories in the war on drugs are illusory? A camera along for the bust produces riveting pictures, but cameras are seldom around when the dealers return to the streets or when a crack house moves to the next block. Institutions of the criminal justice system generally have a stake in exaggerating what they have already done and what they *could* do if only more money were thrown at them. In an October 1 *New York Times Magazine* article titled “Crack’s Destructive Sprint Across America,” Michael Massing took a close look at a number of alleged success stories. He shows, for example, how the crack business in Kansas City, thought to have been wiped out two years ago when one gang was mopped up, was quickly taken up by two other gangs, while a remnant of the routed group is now resurfacing in Des Moines and Omaha. Further, it is not clear that when the supply goes down prices go up and that, if they do, demand dutifully

declines. And what about new drugs? Last August 31, the *San Francisco Chronicle* front-paged the arrival of “ice” — methamphetamine made to be smoked, far more potent and destructive than crack. It can be manufactured in an apartment — so it doesn’t have to be smuggled across a border. If we defeat crack will it matter if ice has moved in? Or the drug after ice?

Other, less dramatic reports have also cast a skeptical light on administration claims about the value of interdiction. But the big news on the drug beat remains battlefield news. Sometimes, watching repetitive footage of murders, drug busts, and “record seizures” one gets the feeling that the so-called war on drugs is itself a drug, keeping the populace high and the promoters in business, serving to keep terribly painful truths at bay. ♦

## WHO SHOULD TEACH JOURNALISM?

BY CASSANDRA TATE

Perhaps you thought the debate over how journalists should learn their craft was settled years ago, there being little left to say after Doris Day convinced Clark Gable, in the 1958 movie *Teacher’s Pet*, that the green eyeshade could co-exist with the mortar board. If so, you haven’t been paying attention. As the fictitious Jim Gannon, rough-hewn city editor of a New York daily, Gable disdained journalism school as “a waste of time,” staffed by “amateurs teaching amateurs

*Cassandra Tate, a doctoral student in history at the University of Washington, is a frequent contributor to CJR.*

how to be amateurs." Doris Day played the teacher who taught him that aspiring journalists needed the guidance of both "the old pros and the eggheads." The movie is dated in a number of particulars, among them a scene in which a discarded cigarette butt ignites a fire in a wastepaper basket in the city room. Cigarettes are as much out of place in today's newsrooms as typewriters, fedoras, and pica poles. But the debate over what journalists should be taught and by whom continues, the subject of an ever-growing pile of studies and reports and calls for action.

The issue bubbled up at San Francisco State University recently when the administration moved to require that all new hires in the journalism department hold doctoral degrees — a departure from its longstanding philosophy that journalism skills are best taught by skilled journalists. (Applicants have been required to have at least five years of experience and submit samples of their work.) Department chairman Betty Medsger hopes to persuade the administration to permit the continued emphasis on professional background. Medsger feels so strongly about the issue that she declined to fill a new position rather than stipulate that applicants hold advanced degrees. For the moment, the matter is on hold at SFSU, but elsewhere the practitioners are losing ground to the academicians.

A study released in June by David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, journalism professors at Indiana University, showed a marked trend toward credentialism in undergraduate journalism schools and departments. Thirty years ago, only a small minority of journalism educators had doctorates. Using data collected in 1987, Weaver and Wilhoit found that half the full-time faculty held PhDs. The researchers concluded that a doctorate is fast becoming an essential qualification for teaching journalism, even at small colleges and universities. While most people in the field would argue that a strong faculty needs members with diverse backgrounds, college administrators — who usually have final authority over hiring criteria — tend to favor applicants with primarily academic backgrounds over those with primarily professional experience. Packing the faculty with PhDs is a way to gain status

and prestige, particularly for second-rung institutions with more ambition than reputation.

Although most of the educators surveyed by Weaver and Wilhoit had some experience, ranging from one year to fifty, those with doctorates had half as much as those without (an average of 6.5 years compared to 12). "That suggests to me that the people who are going after the PhD had a few years of experience as a reporter or copy editor and then went back to school," says Robert H. Giles, editor and publisher of *The Detroit News*. "Those who don't have PhDs have a broader range of experience. Obviously, broad experience and a PhD is the best of both worlds, but distinguished journalists who want to come into teaching generally don't have PhDs, and what they have to offer won't be complemented or strengthened by going off for a couple of years and getting one."

Medsger, at San Francisco State, approaches the problem of credentials by arguing that journalism is a scholarly activity in and of itself, and that the body of work produced by a first-rate journalist is equal to that represented by a doctoral dissertation. "The tendency is to look at journalists and say they're carpenters, not scholars," she says. "I'm trying to point out that the excellent journalist is someone who has developed expert skills in critical thinking and clear expression. Those are at the heart of the skills of the academy." The concept has its detractors, chief among them journalism educators who have earned PhDs the traditional way.

The issue of who should teach journalism is tied to the question of what should be taught. Journalism schools of old were oriented toward specific skills, primarily those of the newsroom. Since the mid-1970s, enrollments have soared, but most of the growth has come in broadcasting, advertising, and public relations. This has led to demands for conceptual courses organized around a common theme, such as "writing for the media," as opposed to such specific courses as "headline writing" or "documentary filmmaking."

That many schools are adopting a more generic approach is reflected in the fact that an increasing number of them are dropping the word "journalism" in

favor of something like "mass communications" or "communications studies" to describe what they do. One result of the fluid nomenclature is that it's not even clear any more how many four-year journalism schools there are in the country. One study puts the figure at 343, another at 394.

The newspaper industry has led the charge in resisting any changes in the traditional curriculum.

**"In journalism education, as in nature, there is strength in diversity"**

Giles, of *The Detroit News*, speaks for many of his colleagues when he says that the function of journalism schools is to train journalists, and that a shift of emphasis away from skills courses will produce graduates who can't function on the job. Among those who agree is a real-life "Jim Gannon": James P. Gannon, former editor of *The Des Moines Register*, now Washington bureau chief for *The Detroit News*. "You can turn out a lot of good theoreticians who wouldn't be any value in covering a news story," he says.

In journalism education, as in nature, there is strength in diversity. Students need to learn the skills associated with a particular job, but they also need to understand the broader issues, such as the role of mass media in society and the ethics associated with that role. Competence to teach these subjects is not guaranteed either by the number of years in the trenches or by the number of letters behind one's name. Beyond that caveat, it makes sense that skills can best be taught by people who have mastered them, and that the theoretical issues can best be explored by scholars trained in the disciplines of the academy. Both the industries and the schools could profit from more cross-pollination, with professionals taking year-long sabbaticals in the classroom and the teachers taking "work breaks" in the office. Several reports have made similar recommendations over the years, most notably one produced by the University of Oregon's School of Journalism in 1984. But Clark Gable's character really said all that needs to be said: "Experience is the jockey; education is the horse." ♦

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# DARTS AND LAURELS

◆ **DART** to the Lawrence, Massachusetts, *Eagle-Tribune*, for journalistic child abuse. On its August 2 front page, the Pulitzer Prize-winning paper carried an "in-depth" interview with Tanya Zeytoonian, a five-year-old child whose parents had been arrested the day before for possession of cocaine. The story was accompanied by no fewer than five photographs of the frightened child clutching her cabbage patch doll and "explaining," between tears, how **DRUGS** **TEAR FAMILY APART**, "how she hears her father come into her room at night, looking in her purse for money," and how "she prays every night for her parents to stop using cocaine." As if to forestall any possible criticism that an unprotected minor was being exploited for the sake of a sob-filled story, the report took pains to note that, in begging for help, Tanya "spoke freely."

◆ **DART** to the *Journal and Constitution* of Atlanta, Georgia, which is also the home of Coca-Cola, for a front-page news story that had the unmistakable flavor of a real promotional thing. Gurgling on for a dozen paragraphs about the soft drink's popularity among the citizens of Brazil, the above-the-fold story (August 13) managed to mention the local product by name some fifteen times, not counting the caption below the accompanying five-by-seven-inch four-color picture of a Brazilian vendor seated next to a cooler full of clearly labeled cans.

◆ **LAUREL** to WNBC-TV, New York City, and "Live at Five," for a bracing departure from the synergistic norm. Only hours before NBC's highly touted prime-time magazine show, *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, made its debut, the network's owned-and-operated station in New York presented television critic Katie Kelly's less than enthusiastic review. "The acting — Yes! Acting! On a news show! — is terrible," Kelly told her viewers. "As for those phony recreations: Awful. There is a lot to mislead the viewer in this and that's just not fair. It's as close to an electronic lie as you can get . . . NBC should be ashamed of itself for putting [the anchors] — and us — through this." (For an example of the rule that is proven by this rare exception, see the September issue of *M* magazine, featuring a cover story on "ABC's Television Tiger, Sam [Donaldson] the Man" and his brand-new prime-time magazine show (with Diane Sawyer) on ABC. *M* is owned by Fairchild Publications, which in turn is owned by CapCities/ABC.)



Katie Kelly

◆ **DART** to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, for discounting the news that the huge May Department Stores Company, headquartered in St. Louis, had during the past twelve months paid more than \$1 million to settle lawsuits charging subsidiary stores in California, Maryland, and New York with deceptive advertising practices. As revealed in the July/August issue of the *St. Louis Journalism Review*, the *Post-Dispatch* had been alerted more than once to the company's pattern of trumpeting big "savings" on items that had seldom, if ever, been sold at a higher price, but had not found the matter newsworthy. The paper strongly denied that the lack of coverage had anything to do with the fact that the local May company chain, Famous-Barr, is one of its largest advertisers. (The *Post-Dispatch* finally caught up with the story in early July, only days after the journalism review had contacted *P-D* editors for comment on its upcoming critique.)

◆ **DART** to *The New York Times Magazine*, for a glaring omission in its admiring profile of S.I. Newhouse and his publishing empire, Condé Nast. Besides providing a rapid rundown of the emperor's holdings and his recent acquisitions (from the \$200 million *New Yorker* to a \$17 million Jasper Johns), the September 10 cover story offered entertaining insights into Newhouse's personality, the most revealing of these being his driving fear of losing the family fortune (estimated elsewhere as America's greatest concentration of wealth in private hands). Nowhere, however, in the 5,000-word piece, did the *Times* find room for what Richard Pollak, in a fascinating *Nation* article earlier this year, called the "unpleasantness" between the Newhouse family and the IRS — namely, the extraordinary month-long trial in which Newhouse and his brother were accused of dodging more than \$1 billion in taxes (far more than in the highly publicized Helmsley case). Noting the reluctance of even those newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses that Newhouse *doesn't* own to report in depth on the still-pending case, Pollak helpfully included the phone number of the U.S. Tax Court in Washington, where a complete transcript of the trial is readily available. The number, for the information of the *Times* magazine and others, is 202-376-2727.

◆ **DART** to the *San Diego Tribune* and its editor and columnist, Neil Morgan, for unbecoming modesty. Morgan went out of his way in his bylined columns of April 28, July 3, 12, 18, 29, and August 7 to plug an upcoming profile of the city of San Diego in *National Geographic* magazine — noting, among other forgettable facts, the name of the

magazine's photographer, the name of the magazine's editor, and the name of the profile's original writer, who had tragically died and had had to be replaced. None of the columns, however, mentioned the fact that the "new writer [who had been] named" was Morgan himself.

◆ **DART** to the New York *Daily News* for being Penney wise and pound foolish. Most readers who saw the October 4 edition learned from its page-one headline that the PANAMA COUP FAILS; other readers, however, in certain selected areas, got a different brand of news: GALA GRAND OPENING OF JCPENNEY AT NEWPORT CENTRE, the 26-point page-one headline proclaimed. The rest of the page of "New York's Picture Newspaper" was given over to a 10-by-6-inch artist's rendition of the JCPenney store. The caption noted that video makeovers by Revlon were among the grand opening events.



◆ **LAUREL** to *The Hartford Courant*, for an unsettling report on the widespread practice of racial discrimination by area realtors. Posing as prospective homebuyers in the \$200,000 market, teams of black and white reporters visited fifteen agencies in Hartford and its suburbs and found that at all too many — including such reputable firms as Merrill Lynch and Century 21 — black clients (unlike their white counterparts) were subjected to financial grilling, racial steering, and tactics that effectively barred them from even seeing the inside of a house. (In a somewhat uncommon development, the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors welcomed the probe as a "very valid means of getting to the bottom of the issue," while the paper's own ombudsman condemned it on the ground that deception had been used.)

◆ **DART** to the Madison, Wisconsin, *Capital Times*, for failing Ethics 101. The paper recently assigned Jacob Stockinger, who holds a part-time, \$12,000-a-year teaching post at the University of Wisconsin, to cover the UW beat — but, according to an article in the alternative weekly

*Isthmus*, neither Stockinger nor his editors see a conflict of interest problem. But, then, "Why," as *Isthmus* news editor Bill Lueders reasonably asked, "if journalists can draw more than \$10,000 a year from an institution they cover without compromising their integrity, do newspapers inveigh against politicians who accept much smaller sums from lobbyists and others trying to influence the public debate?"

◆ **DART** to the *Los Angeles Times*, for its curious failure to report on the twenty-three-year prison sentence handed down in a case involving a bogus news and fashion photographer convicted on thirty counts of child molestation and unlawful sex with minors. As noted in a prominent story in the rival *Orange County Register*, the man — who had kept detailed diaries (and pictures) of his exploits with more than 500 girls and women and whose inducements had included alcohol and cocaine — had made a request for leniency which the judge denied, saying, "I've never seen anything quite like this; it is a most serious case." The *Register's* story also noted that, at the time of his arrest, the offender had been employed as circulation sales chief for the Orange County edition of the *Los Angeles Times*.

◆ **LAUREL** to *Alaska* magazine, for "Paradise Lost," a devastating cover story on the environmental havoc wreaked by the oil spill of the Exxon Valdez and its inestimable damage to the region's once-idyllic way of life. At the cost of a number of cancelled tour-company ads, the magazine reported, in twenty-one pages of eloquent despair, on the poisoned carcasses of oiled otters and seabirds lying matted and unrecognizable along the beach, and on the sense of death hanging over Alaskan fishing villages; it also retraced the course of the alcoholic captain's ship, of the twelve-year p.r. campaign by the oil industry to calm the public's fears of just such accidental spills, and of the Exxon Corporation's mismanagement in cleaning up the mess. (For contrast, see the weekly *Valdez Vanguard*, which, in an extreme example of protective coverage, completely circumnavigated the news of tanker Captain Joseph Hazelwood's history of drinking. As publisher Lynn Wolf told the *Alaska Oil Spill Reporter*, "I made a conscious decision that it was never clear that had anything to do with the wreck.")

◆ **DART** to *Newsweek*, for the unreserved sexism in its August 21 story about hotel queen Leona Helmsley and her troubles with the IRS. The issue's big, bold, rib-nudging cover line: RHYMES WITH RICH. As the story inside observed, "Some are blaming . . . male attitudes for at least part of Leona's troubles"; the story went on to quote a woman executive who noted that "We didn't savage Claus von Bulow to the same extent we savage Mrs. Helmsley — and he was on trial for [attempted] murder." No, indeed — nor did *Newsweek* run a cover line on the von Bulow story reading RHYMES WITH SICK.

*This column is compiled and written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be directed.*

# Michigan Journalism Fellows



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# Massachusetts Institute of Technology





NOVEMBER/DECEMBER  
1989

# THE SYSTEM THAT BROUGHT YOU *DAYS* *of RAGE*

Does public  
television's  
hunger for  
funding make  
it vulnerable  
to special  
interests?

BY STEVEN EMERSON

On September 8, two days after public television stations across the country aired *Days of Rage* — Jo Franklin-Trout's sympathetic documentary about the young Palestinians of the intifada — *The New York Times* published an editorial that raised questions about the willingness of the Public Broadcasting Service to investigate the sources of funding of programs it uses.

"Available evidence," it said, "now suggests that the Arab American Cultural Foundation, which draws support from Kuwaiti and other Arab interests, has accurately claimed sponsorship of the film. The foundation, which was involved with the production from its inception, has purchased copies and the remaining rights to the film . . . . If the foundation agreed at the outset to make these purchases, then it is . . . a sponsor.

"PBS has rules to protect against broadcasting programs that are ostensibly journalism but are actually propaganda. But the network was unable at air time to tell viewers whether those safeguards had been breached. Commenting on charges of hidden sponsorship, an announcer said somewhat enigmatically, 'PBS has investigated these

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*Steven Emerson, an early investigator of the Days of Rage funding controversy, is a Washington-based reporter whose most recent book is Secret Warriors: Inside the Covert Military Operations of the Reagan Era.*



Jo Franklin-Trout, who produced *Days of Rage*, interviews one of the underground leaders of the intifada

allegations and at this time has found no basis for canceling this broadcast."

"That's not good enough for the integrity of public television . . .," the editorial continued. "A fuller accounting is in order, including an explanation of the network's routine practices for maintaining public confidence in journalism."

As a provider of public affairs programming, PBS is expected to encourage the airing of documentaries on controversial topics of public interest, to venture where the commercial networks won't go; at the same time, its own rules forbid "editorial control to be exercised by program funders." PBS rules are explicit in stipulating that programs are "unacceptable" if funders exercise any editorial control or if there is even "the perception of editorial control" in

## DAYS OF RAGE:

The controversy over *Days of Rage* began with a statement issued by the Public Broadcasting Service that turned out to be erroneous. On March 20, 1989, PBS in Washington sent a memo to all the public television stations around the country informing them that member station WNYC in New York City had agreed to serve as the host, or "presenting station," for *Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians*.

In fact, WNYC never agreed to host the film, and, despite a March 28 correction by PBS acknowledging the mistake, the film's producer, Jo Franklin-Trout, and newspaper columnists such as *The New York Times*'s Anthony Lewis, accused WNYC of censorship and suppression of free speech. Some critics attributed WNYC's "withdrawal" to pressure from the Jewish community.

WNYC officials, however, say that what most concerned them was the program's funding and what they perceived to be its lack of balance. Franklin-Trout had told PBS officials that the \$180,000 she spent on the film came from her own funds — money generated by the sale of cassettes of three previous documentaries she had done: *Saudi Arabia*, *The Oil Kingdoms*, and *The Great Space Race*. To explain the quantity of cassette sales that the \$180,000 figure suggests, she produced letters documenting donations to her production company for free distribution of the cassettes to colleges and high schools around the country.

PBS's failure to release the names of donors raised the suspicions of officials at WNYC. On June 7 Mary Perot Nichols, the head of WNYC, wrote PBS president Bruce Christensen "requesting that you inform PBS member stations of the source of production funds for *Days of Rage*." Citing PBS's rules prohibiting any connection between a program's underwriters and the program's subject, Nichols asked, "Why has PBS refused to identify the sources of this highly unusual funding arrangement? . . . PBS stations need to know the identity of the funding sources if they are

to determine whether or not this program violates PBS's own guidelines."

Christensen replied that "we have for some time been looking into the various charges about funding sources for *Days of Rage*. . . [and] to date, there is simply no evidence that the funding came from sources other than those which the film's producer disclosed to us originally."

Christensen still did not release Franklin-Trout's list of donors, including one organization that might have invited scrutiny because of its obvious interest in the subject of the documentary — an interest group called the Arab American Cultural Foundation, which, according to Franklin-Trout's letter, had contributed \$33,000 in 1984 for the purchase of *Saudi Arabia* and *The Oil Kingdoms*. (Recently, *Washington Jewish Week* reporters Larry Cohler and Walter Ruby cast some doubt on this version of Franklin-Trout's connection to the foundation when they disclosed that the foundation's publicly available tax records — which are supposed to list all major expenditures — do not list any purchase of Franklin-Trout's cassettes in 1984 or, indeed, any other year.)

PBS had another piece of evidence that certainly invited scrutiny. Months earlier, PBS had been given copies — supplied by a former colleague of Franklin-Trout — of two expensive brochures printed in 1988 by the foundation, each brochure stating that "*Days of Rage* [is] a documentary film sponsored by the Arab American Cultural Foundation." In addition, a former member of the production team for the documentary had told PBS that the film had been secretly funded by foreign money.

PBS rules require it to review "written arrangements" between producers and funders and "where appropriate . . . examine all other relevant facts and circumstances." PBS questioned Franklin-Trout and the foundation, and both denied that the foundation had provided funds intended for the production of the film. After that, PBS apparently dropped the matter. *Days of Rage* was aired on September

cases where there exists "a very clear and direct connection between the interests, products, services, etc. of a potential funder and the subject of the program or series."

The problem — highlighted by *Days of Rage* — is that public television's constant thirst for funding and its muddled sense of its mission tempt it to abandon these high standards, to bend the rules for some underwriters and producers — even to close its eyes to manipulation — on the one hand, and to shy away from controversial documentaries on the other, forcing determined producers to dig up money on their own, sometimes from parties with a connection to the subject of the program.

Some long-time observers charge that PBS and its member stations routinely violate the service's own funding rules. John Weisman, formerly *TV Guide*'s Washington bu-

reau chief, now a senior fellow of the Annenberg Washington Program of Northwestern University, says, "PBS is now in the business of marketing goods — from cookbooks to the public image of the funders." Weisman decries what he calls the "creeping commercialism" of PBS and points to several shows that have been funded by sponsors with a financial interest in the content of programs — for example, Beringer Vineyards' partial underwriting of Madeline Kaymann's cooking show (in which the wine she uses is Beringer), and the underwriting of *This Old House*, a program about how to fix up a house, by Weyerhaeuser ("providers of building materials . . . that help Americans live better").

Weisman believes that PBS's dependence on corporate contributions has made the service willing to do almost anything to accommodate the funders. "If I were to walk

## FOLLOWING THE MONEY

6, along with a wraparound (cost: about \$150,000) and a panel discussion meant to provide balance.

Early this September, *The New Republic* published my article detailing how *Days of Rage* was financed by the Arab American Cultural Foundation, which in turn is funded by Kuwaiti and other Arab businesses and the government of Saudi Arabia.

My evidence:

- In multiple interviews I conducted in August with Hisham Sharabi, the head of the Arab American Cultural Foundation, he acknowledged that the foundation had "purchased the distribution rights to the film" and that this agreement had been made prior to production of the documentary, which Franklin-Trout filmed in twenty-one days in June 1988; that "the moment [the film] gets aired it belongs to us"; and that funds for those rights — he could not remember the exact timing or the amount — were transferred to Franklin-Trout some time after she completed the film. (After advance copies of *The New Republic* article were released to the press, Sharabi issued a statement to *The Washington Post* in which he said that the foundation had made a down payment in the fall of 1988 for the rights to the film, toward a total of less than \$30,000. Franklin-Trout afterwards told the *Post* that Sharabi was "confused," that the foundation's only financial connection to her was the \$33,000 1984 donation for the older documentaries.)

- In taped interviews (conducted in the spring of 1988 — before the controversy had reached the press) with a former member of the *Days of Rage* production crew, both Sharabi and Samiya Farouki, the co-chairman of the foundation, repeatedly said that the foundation had a legal agreement with Franklin-Trout and that it had "funded" the film.

- Following completion of the film in the summer of 1988, foundation officials viewed a rough cut and deemed it acceptable, according to Sharabi. It was after that viewing that the brochures, touting *Days of Rage* as "a documentary film sponsored by" the foundation, were printed.

Despite this evidence, PBS officials still held to the position that nothing was amiss. On August 29, 1989, Lance Ozier, PBS vice-president for program administration, wrote me in response to questions and to the evidence I had outlined to him: "On the basis of your report of yesterday, this morning PBS once again contacted Dr. Sharabi and Ms. Franklin-Trout, and carefully questioned them about the information you provided us. For your information, both Dr. Sharabi and Ms. Franklin-Trout deny that there are any arrangements between the Arab American Cultural Foundation and Pacific Productions [Franklin-Trout's production company] for funding the film or for purchase of rights."

On September 11, three days after a *New York Times* editorial calling into question PBS's investigation into the funding of the documentary, PBS vice-presidents Neil Maher and Barry Chase sent an internal memo to stations around the country. While vowing to continue the investigation of "the allegations surrounding the funding," the memo stated that "PBS disagrees with the *Times* editorial's conclusion that the Arab American Cultural Foundation was 'involved with the production from the inception' " or that it bought rights to Franklin-Trout's documentary. As evidence, PBS cited denials by both Franklin-Trout and the foundation. Finally, the memo added, "PBS disagrees with the editorial's conclusion that an arrangement to purchase distribution rights to *Days of Rage* makes anyone a funder."

Jo Franklin-Trout told me and other reporters that — except for the 1984 donation — she had no financial relationship with the Arab American foundation. Still, the only conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is that an agreement was concluded in May 1988 — before the film was made — between the filmmaker and the foundation to provide funds for *Days of Rage*. Her back-door financing is reminiscent of the way in which former Speaker of the House Jim Wright evaded the limits of maximum allowable honoraria by selling his book at an inflated royalty rate to wealthy political supporters. S.E.

into PBS with \$8 million in my hand from a major corporation that raised pigs for a series on pigs, PBS would find a way to circumvent the rules," he says. Oil companies, Weisman observes, have been particularly generous to public television. In one thirty-two-hour prime-time schedule he studied in 1981, 72 percent of all shows were sponsored by four multinational oil companies. Oil companies have contributed between \$15 million and \$20 million annually in recent years — sponsoring *Great Performances*, *Masterpiece Theatre*, and other cultural shows. Weisman says that "even though there is nothing written, the opinion of the oil companies gets filtered down to the producers." It is difficult to see how Texaco, for example, influences anyone in any negative way by sponsoring a concert series; the more subtle — and pernicious — influence of large corporate underwriters may appear in other programming decisions, such as whether to accept exposés on corporate polluters or oil company collusion with South Africa.

Documentaries on controversial topics run the risk of offending subscribers and corporate underwriters, and independent producers have long contended that this is the



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sponsoring propaganda'**

FRED FRIENDLY

reason for the drift away from cutting-edge political and economic subjects by the 337 stations in the public broadcasting system. "Public Broadcasting has \$1.2 billion, and they put it into more cooking and wildlife shows," says Lawrence Daressa, chairman of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcast Producers. "[Documentary producers] have to look for funders who are interested; there are all kinds of interest."

When it does decide to run a documentary that has not been commissioned or funded by PBS or a member station, PBS faces the task of ascertaining its true financial and production history, which is not always easy. "The shows that get picked up by PBS have been bouncing around the globe," says Lawrence K. Grossman, a former PBS president and former head of NBC News who is now a senior fellow at the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia

University. "It's sometimes impossible to get at their roots." On the other hand, Fred Friendly, formerly president of CBS News, now director of the Columbia University Seminars on Media and Society (some of which are broadcast on PBS), says that "the viewer has a right to expect that PBS — or any other journalistic entity — will disclose who has paid for or influenced the program the viewer is watching."

One of the few times PBS did reject a program was in March 1989, when it found out that *March of the Living*, a program about the visit of young Jewish Americans to the sites of concentration camps, had been partly funded and produced by the Central Agency for Jewish Education, in Miami. PBS rejected the show because of the direct connection between the sponsor and the program. As it wrote to Jewish organizations that had complained, "The purpose of this policy is to avoid a situation where PBS becomes the mouthpiece of whatever interests can muster the most money and other resources for television production — no matter how worthy these interests may seem."

Despite such lofty statements, PBS has occasionally allowed shows to be aired even though officials were aware that the underwriters had a vested interest in the program's subject matter. Three years ago, as Jeremy Gerard of *The New York Times* reported recently, several PBS stations aired a documentary called *Nicaragua Was My Home*, about the violation of Miskito Indians' human rights by the Sandinista-controlled government. Before the film was broadcast, PBS learned that it had been paid for by an anticommunist organization run by the Unification Church, which is led by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon and which has made the Sandinistas a prime political target of its ideology. PBS included a disclaimer in the broadcast.

Two years ago another controversy erupted among local public television stations over *Faces of Japan II*, a thirteen-week series presenting a largely favorable picture of modern Japanese life. When CBS News broadcast a report citing *Faces of Japan* as an example of Japan's strategy of fostering a positive image in the U.S., local public television stations started raising questions about the independence of the series and who the funders were. It turned out that four of the five underwriters were major Japanese associations and corporations — Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Hitachi, Matsushita Electronics, and OKI Electric. (American Airlines was the fifth.)

In response to criticism, Pacific Mountain Network, the regional public television network which presented the series, sent a memo to all public television stations asserting that it felt "absolutely confident that the content of the program was free from any type of Japanese government or underwriter influence." Although most stations broadcast the series, some refused it.

In October 1984, PBS broadcast a nine-part series called *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews*, funded by fifty individuals and organizations, mostly Jewish. Not surprisingly, the last segment presented a sympathetic portrait of the historical origins of Zionism and the state of Israel. And



in 1982, PBS officials allowed a three-part and quite uncritical series called *Saudi Arabia* (produced by Jo Franklin-Trout) to be broadcast, even though they knew that the four multinational corporate sponsors of the program had done billions of dollars of business with Saudi Arabia. While the underwriters were listed, viewers had no way of knowing the financial interests each company had in Saudi Arabia or



## **'PBS has to figure out ways of funding the tough stuff'**

LAWRENCE GROSSMAN

how concerned they might be in making sure that the program would serve as an effective public relations vehicle for their powerful business partner.

If there is anything on which both PBS critics and PBS officials agree, it is that PBS does not conduct aggressive investigations to discover hidden funders or hidden strings attached by the financial underwriters. "We are not in the business of auditing journalists," says PBS vice-president Lance Ozier. "We depend upon their integrity." Weisman expresses the same thought a bit differently: "The PBS establishment is not capable of investigating conflicts of interest."

Where critics and officials differ is on the question of whether PBS should be required to conduct such investigations.

The investigative powers of PBS are, admittedly, limited. It has no legal authority to demand that anyone provide it with documents or even tell it the truth. About all it can do is ask a producer and funders to submit relevant documents, ask questions of other interested parties, and check with knowledgeable people, public records, and published accounts to verify statements and the authenticity of documents. PBS seems generally reluctant to conduct such investigations, however, often relying instead on the reputation of the producer.

PBS officials have argued that an agreement with a party to purchase post-broadcast rights does not constitute sponsorship — even if the party has a clear interest in the editorial slant of the program — if the agreement is made after the program is produced and the party does not fund the production of the program.

"I can list you 100 producers that have an agreement on rights after selling to PBS — Jewish programs sold to Jewish organizations, black programs sold to black colleges, and so forth," says Gail Christian, formerly the director of

news and special projects for PBS — and a strong proponent of *Days of Rage* — who left the network at the end of September. She declined to provide specific examples, however, saying that she did not want to drag other documentary producers into the *Days of Rage* controversy. Christian argues that public television cannot pay documentary producers nothing or next to nothing, as it currently does, and then outlaw the sale of post-broadcast rights to interested parties: "I have no more problem with Jo Franklin-Trout making a post-distribution deal to the [Arab American Cultural Foundation] than I have to any director selling them to any other special-interest group."

Christian says it would be impossible for PBS to control such arrangements — "How could we monitor conversations about post-broadcast deals?" But when such deals are arranged prior to production, they clearly violate PBS rules. And those rules, which appear so firm on the page, seem rather loose in practice. When asked what PBS's position would have been had it been given a hypothetical "smoking gun" — a photocopy of a check from the Arab American Cultural Foundation in payment for the distribution rights to *Days of Rage*, written prior to the making of the film — PBS vice-president Ozier replied, "We would have added further information for the viewer. The only thing that would have kept *Days of Rage* off the air would have been if there was fraud, such as use of scripts or actors."

**I**s full disclosure the answer? "Disclosure is one of the most fundamental tenets of journalism," says Fred Friendly. "It is incumbent upon PBS to find out who is paying for a show. If it doesn't, it's going to end up sponsoring propaganda," which Friendly defines as "public relations — sponsored or directed by a lobby or interest group."

A section of the Federal Communications Commission Act, in fact, requires that all financial sponsors of any political broadcast matter be clearly identified to the public. According to FCC regulations, in the "case of any political broadcast matter or any broadcast matter involving the discussion of a controversial issue of public importance . . . an announcement shall be made . . . stating the fact that the broadcast matter was sponsored, paid for, or furnished [and the broadcaster shall] fully and fairly disclose the true identity of the person or persons, corporation, committee . . . or any other entity by whom or on whose behalf such payment is made or promised . . ."

For Friendly, the key to PBS's problems lies in the absence of an editor-in-chief with journalistic sensibilities. Such an editor could have pursued the leads about the funding of *Days of Rage* that the service had been given, Friendly asserts. [PBS will have a more powerful top programming executive starting November 27, when public television veteran Jennifer Lawson assumes the newly created position of executive vice-president of national programming and promotional services.]

Media critic Weisman contends that reducing the funding problem to nothing more than disclosure is really just a way for PBS to avoid the much harder and more painful decisions involving rejection of shows on the basis of in-

appropriate funders. "Disclosure," Weisman says, "is an absolute must, but it shouldn't substitute for adherence to the more important principle — preventing the public from being fed programs which amount to propaganda."

"Someone has to force PBS to clean up its act," he argues. "It's not going to do that on its own." Who should that someone be? Weisman says that only Congress can force PBS to abide by its own rules.

One of the few members of Congress to react in a visible way to the controversy surrounding *Days of Rage* was Representative Tom Lantos of California. Lantos has begun to explore ways to insure PBS accountability. "It is the responsibility of PBS to observe and enforce its own rules regarding the restrictions on editorial interference by funders," he says. "I am not enthusiastic about Congress getting involved, but if PBS won't do it, who will?"

Congress is certainly likely to get involved in issues like those because the nonprofit Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the part of the system that directly receives and distributes the federal part of public television funding — \$162 million in fiscal 1990 — must deliver to Congress by the end of January a plan for restructuring its annual program fund. CPB currently passes along 72 percent of that \$162 million to member stations and uses the remaining \$45 million or so to fund programs. PBS member stations would like CPB to dissolve its programming function and pass along all the federal money to them. Others argue that the independent and powerful individual stations would not be likely to spend that additional money on programming, that the stations are not held accountable to anyone in how they spend federal dollars. These critics argue that CPB's program fund should actually be a larger percentage of the total federal appropriation.

The specter of congressional involvement is very worrisome to Lawrence Grossman: "There is no doubt that PBS should have provided full disclosure in presenting *Days of Rage*. But getting Congress involved is not the answer. Look what happened in the [Robert] Mapplethorpe flap — Congress has attempted to dictate what should be exhibited, in effect to define art. Now it's a terrible mess."

Grossman's chief concern is that the uproar over *Days of Rage* will make it harder for filmmakers and public television to present controversial programs. The challenge facing PBS today, he says, is to insure that it fulfills its mission of "broadcasting shows that you cannot see on the commercial networks. Advocacy journalism has a role," he adds, "and PBS should be the player."

Some independent producers fear that PBS's new internal program council, made up of several senior executives, was created for the purpose of screening out any program that might cause controversy. Gail Christian, the outgoing director of news and special projects, says that the council has no track record yet and shouldn't be judged. She thinks it possible, but unlikely, that the *Days of Rage* affair — which she frames as a free-speech controversy — will have a chilling effect on PBS programming: "You are sitting in your office and you put a tape into the machine and you see, say, *Days of Rage, Part II*. You watch it and you know this is something that the public ought to see."

And you also know that there will be hell to pay.

"You think, 'Do I need this?'" Christian continues. "The simplest thing to do is to slip the tape back in the envelope and send it back to the producer. Why give yourself a headache?"

Given the financial constraints of limited government funds and the corollary — reliance upon private funders — how can PBS continue to get the bold, controversial journalism — unpolluted by propaganda — for which it was noted in its early years? Lawrence Grossman sees it this way: "PBS has to figure out ways of funding the tough stuff and leave the corporations to do the nice cultural stuff."

Fred Friendly likes the idea of having a fixed fund — allocated by the government perhaps, with matching funding supplied by nonprofit foundations — available for journalists who want to make documentaries. In exchange for receiving a grant, the filmmaker would hand over distribution rights to PBS and forswear using funds from parties who might have an interest in slanting the content.

In fact, Congress has taken a partial step in that direction, setting up the Independent Television Service, which held its first meeting in October. ITVS was created through the efforts of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers, and Congress directed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to give it \$6 million a year for the next three years — out of the \$45 million annual program fund — for the production of cutting-edge journalism and arts programs for public television. "It's a broadcast laboratory, to do things that others are too timid or risk-averse to try," says Lawrence Daressa, a board member of ITVS and the chairman of the independent producers group. "We can show what can be done. We don't have to go to the Ford Foundation. We don't have to go to the Arabs. We don't have to go to a corporation." Whether a budget-crunching Congress will eventually expand on this idea remains to be seen.

Surprisingly, PBS itself may be leaning toward allowing more program sponsors with political agendas tied to the contents of the programs. Asked whether the *Days of Rage* controversy should be causing PBS to tighten its rules to insure that funders do not exercise editorial control, PBS vice-president Ozier replied, "PBS has a mandate to broadcast opinions that are non-mainstream. Sometimes these programs come with questionable funders." He went on to say, "We're looking at ways to acknowledge that the mission of public television is to put points of view not ordinarily heard into the public discourse, and that you may have to accept programs that do not comply with your funding guidelines." Pressed further, Ozier said that PBS "might allow a documentary to be broadcast even if we knew that a foreign government had purchased the distribution rights."

John Weisman compares public television to the unfortunate protagonist of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. "Like Blanche DuBois," he says, "public television depends all too often upon the kindness of strangers." ◆

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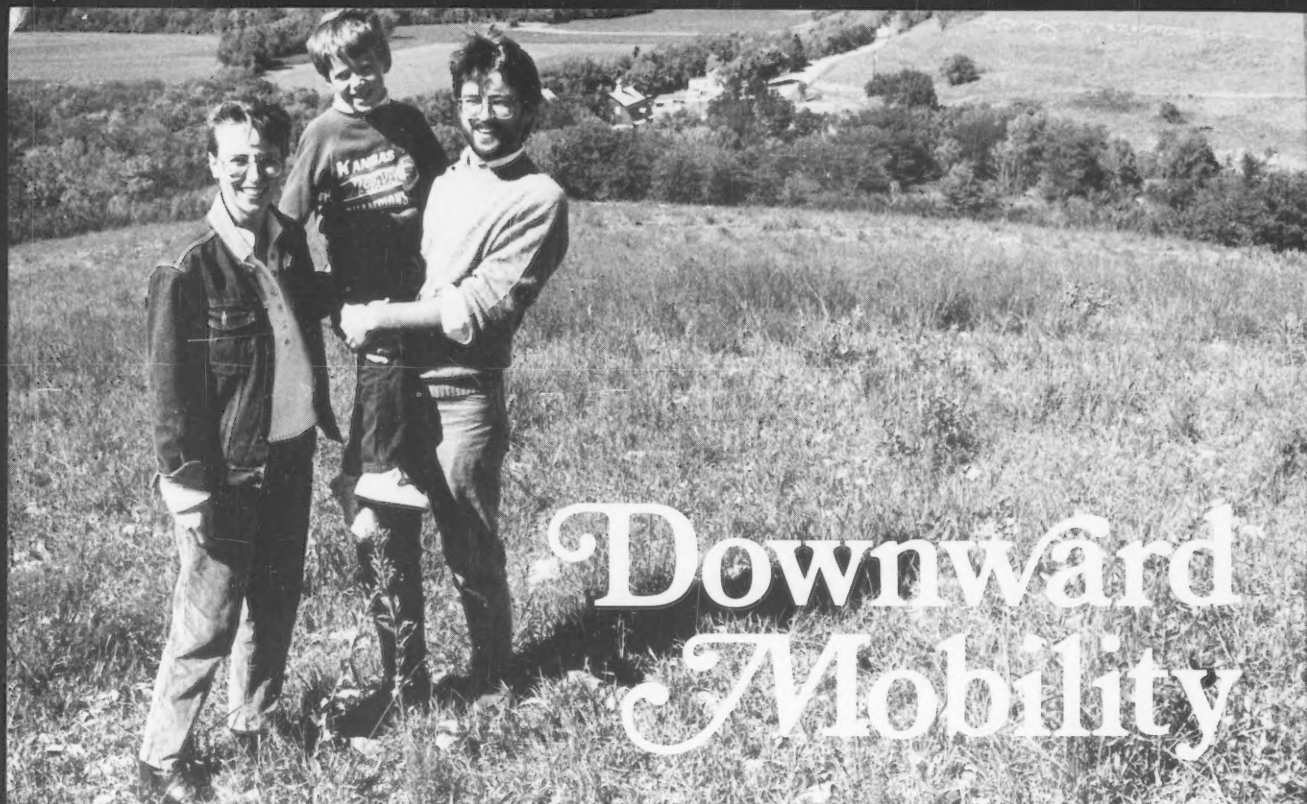
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CJR/Steve Harper

# Downward Mobility

Journalists are trading big-city bylines for a shot at the good life ♦ BY BONNIE MILLER RUBIN

**D**avid Phelps, a reporter for the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, was promoted in 1984 from the court beat to his "dream job" of Washington correspondent. Four years later, the dream was over; he sold his house in Bethesda, Maryland, and returned to the Twin Cities.

"Economic reasons were a big factor — even with a pay cut we could live at a higher level in Minneapolis — but it wasn't the only consideration," says Phelps, who is thirty-nine. He found everything in Washington to be "a production" — from lines at the supermarket to locating a hockey rink for his teen-age son, an avid player. In Washington, that required a sixty-mile trip three or four times a week. Now, the rink is ten minutes from the Phelps' home.

Phelps is one of an increasing number of journalists who are weighing professional status against such benefits as access to hockey rinks.

Mark Nadler, thirty-eight, a former special sections editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, is another. Today it takes him twenty minutes to drive home to his wife and three children from his office in downtown St. Paul, where he is

managing editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*. But he recalls in harrowing detail his daily two-hour train commute from Manhattan to New Jersey: "By the time I got home I didn't want to talk to anyone, I didn't want anyone to touch me, I just wanted to be left alone. I don't know if my marriage would have survived if I had stayed."

The commute wasn't the only rat race he wanted to escape: "There is a huge group of journalists — ranging from mid-thirties to mid-forties — and we're all professionally coming of age at the same time, with the same notion of how we judge success. But the fact is that a whole lot of us are going to be disappointed because, quite simply, there isn't enough room at the top of the pyramid for everyone. That's why we're seeing this trend. If you don't redefine what success means, you're going to be a very unhappy person for the next thirty years."

There was a time when the career ladder for successful journalists went only one direction: up. If you worked hard and paid your dues in the farm clubs, you ended up in the major leagues, some place like New York, Washington, or Los Angeles. Each move brought a bigger audience, better opportunities, and more money. The package included such perquisites as a nice home, good schools, a clean environment, and a safe community.

Today, however, in many cities such basics are nearly

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Bonnie Miller Rubin, a former reporter for the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, is the news features editor at the Post-Tribune in Gary, Indiana.



**WICHITA:** John Baxter (left), his wife Bonda and six-year-old son Kristofer moved from the west side of Manhattan to central Kansas for a less hectic life and a job on the *Wichita Eagle*. "It wasn't an easy decision, but it was the right decision," he says. The *Eagle* has hired three New Yorkers this year.

**EUGENE:** Buying a home was "out of the question" for Kay Black when she worked at the *San Jose Mercury News*. So she and her son Jeston moved to Oregon, and she took a job on the *Register-Guard* in Eugene, a "more uncomplicated place to raise a child."



CJR/Carl Davaz/Eugene Register-Guard

out of reach on a journalist's salary. Even if you *do* succeed in locating a three-bedroom house in a Beaver Cleaver neighborhood, it's often so far from downtown that you spend more time in your car than in your yard. You sit in bumper-to-bumper traffic, powerless to do anything but watch the minutes flash away on the digital clock.

But the tedious commutes and the strain of urban existence aren't the only choices. Quite a few journalists — most of them baby-boomers — are stepping off that one-way ladder into the small-to-medium-sized market. They no longer view cities such as Eugene, Oregon; Albuquerque, New Mexico; or Wichita, Kansas, as way stations to the top, but as final destinations — the key to achieving some balance in life.

"The number of résumés I've received from people at large papers has steadily increased," says William Handy, managing editor of the *Wichita Eagle*. "During the last year we've hired three people from New York publications. That would have been virtually unheard of five years ago.

"What's surprising," he adds, "is how many top-notch people are saying, 'I don't want to do this anymore.' They all mention good schools, clean air, short commutes, and affordable housing. At twenty-five, those things aren't important; at thirty-five, they're a priority."

They were for John Baxter, the thirty-two-year-old art director at the *Eagle* who left New York for Wichita last October with his wife and six-year-old son. "The city is so much more dangerous now than it was when we moved there eight years ago," he says. "When we told people we were leaving, no one questioned our decision. A few people

said, 'I envy you.' " Baxter left jobs at *American Health*, where he had been associate art director, and at *Mother Earth News*, where he was art director. "I miss the pace and the sources — like the New York Public Library — but my son is just made for this life," Baxter says. "It wasn't an easy decision, but it was the right decision."

Peggy Kuhr, who left *The Hartford Courant* (circulation: 224,000) for the *Spokane Spokesman-Review and Chronicle* (combined circulation: 122,000), says that since taking the city editor position in 1987 she has hired several people from papers like *The Miami Herald* and the *Dallas Times Herald*, all attracted to the bucolic life in Washington. "People have had it with crazy life-styles," she says. "You do not have to sacrifice career for a nice place to live."

**W**hile cities like Wichita and Spokane gain, places like Orange County, California, lose. John Hollon, assistant managing editor at *The Orange County Register*, must sell recruits on a region where the average price of a home is \$235,000 and some newsroom staff members commute 120 miles a day. "Most new hires are not looking for a big raise; they're just looking for a middle-class existence," Hollon says, "but you cannot afford that here. Our salaries are competitive with other southern California papers [top-scale reporters and editors earn \$900 a week], but it is simply not enough.

"I was born and raised here," Hollon adds, "but if I had a good offer, I'd have to think about it. What you have to give up to live here is enormous."

As we enter the next century, sacrifices will cut even



**MINNEAPOLIS:** David Phelps and his sixteen-year-old son Nathan travel just ten minutes to their local hockey rink now. That is just one of the reasons Phelps left his "dream job" — as Washington correspondent for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* — and returned to the Twin Cities, where life is less of a "production."

deeper. California's average house price, for example, could reach \$470,000 — easily twice the national average — and the speed on Los Angeles's already jammed freeways is predicted to grind down to an excruciating twenty-four miles per hour. Medical and education costs are expected to climb. Paula Rayman, a sociologist at Wellesley College's Stone Center, says that these days many people are "falling behind while getting ahead."

Jerry Lanson, a respected assistant metro editor at the *San Jose Mercury News*, fits that description. Two years ago Lanson left a teaching position at Boston University to get back to the newsroom. By industry standards, he makes a comfortable salary — more than \$800 a week — but, at forty, he's still looking to buy his first home in the Bay area, no small step in a place where the average transaction requires about \$55,000 down and a yearly income of \$75,000 for a mortgage.

"I considered living way out, but when I took this job I signed on for long shifts," says Lanson, who has two young daughters. "If I move where I have to drive three hours a day, I haven't honored that commitment. Meanwhile, prices keep escalating and we keep losing ground."

**K**ay Black, thirty-eight, a former colleague of Lanson's at the *Mercury-News*, was able to buy a home when she moved to Eugene, Oregon, last year — a purchase that would have been "out of the question" for a single mother in San Jose.

"Family certainly played a significant factor in my decision," says Black, who has a thirteen-year-old son. "Not only was I able to buy a home, but Eugene is a more uncomplicated place to raise a child. My son's at an age where he needs a lot of security and attention and it was easier to give him those things here."

At the *Mercury News*, Black was an assistant editor at the paper's North County bureau. She saw opportunities not only in San Jose but elsewhere in the Knight-Ridder chain. She took all that into consideration when the *Register-Guard* offered her the city editor spot. "It was the most difficult decision I ever made in my life," Black says. "I vacillated

for a week. But I still don't feel as if I made any professional trade-offs, because this is a very good paper that puts its resources into local coverage. You can make a tremendous impact."

While not everyone wants to live and work in a small or mid-sized city, most people want more control over their time. Turning down big stories and beats in favor of regular hours is another way for some journalists to get their personal and professional lives in harmony. At the *Mercury News*, for example, the San Francisco 49ers' beat was still open as of mid-September. The position had been offered to two reporters from other papers. But despite an opportunity to cover the Super Bowl champions and a salary of at least \$800 a week, says Mike Antonucci, assistant sports editor, both candidates declined. "We're caught in a bind. Because of the cost of living it's very hard to attract new people and because of the pace it's very difficult to get anyone on staff to take the job."

Antonucci, who has covered both the 49ers and the Raiders, speaks from experience. "When the season is over, you are ground down to a cinder. You've been out of your family's life from August to January and the pressure is constant. Every morning you pick up four other dailies to see if you got beat. Who needs it?"

Who, indeed?

Carol Ann Riordan, associate director of The American Press Institute in Reston, Virginia, says that problems created by the challenge of balancing professional aspirations with a personal life is one of the chief concerns of the 1,200 professionals who attend the center's seminars each year. "So many are working fifty-, sixty-, and seventy-hour weeks," Riordan says. "They're part of a dual-career couple and they have children, but just can't do it all."

"In the sessions we conduct on 'Outlook for Newspapers' we keep hammering away that readers have no time, but I'm not sure we remember that the person who sits behind the VDT is no different than the person who throws the quarter in the vending machine. The industry is losing talented, inquisitive people who love newspapers, but who also love being full participants in life." ♦

THE

# ANDERSON FILE

BY STEVE WEINBERG



## What modern muckrakers can learn from an old pro's triumphs and blunders

Jack Anderson has a mind "lower than the regurgitated filth of vultures."

*J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director*

"Leaking to Jack Anderson is like treating with a foreign power; as an apostle of all that's holy and virtuous he assumes at times the position of a sovereign state."

*Marquis Childs, syndicated columnist*

"Jack Anderson is the one columnist in this nation who habitually lies."

*Jimmy Carter, U.S. president*

HUNT TOLD ASSOCIATES OF ORDERS TO KILL JACK ANDERSON.

*Front-page headline in The Washington Post, September 21, 1975. The story, by Bob Woodward, said officials in the Nixon administration, including E. Howard Hunt, had plotted to assassinate Anderson. Woodward noted that "leaks to Anderson infuriated the White House to the point that President Nixon worried about his ability to conduct foreign affairs."*

**E**arlier this year, having heard from sources that terrorists were planning to kill members of Congress, Jack Anderson — the most omnipresent journalist in America — decided to test the Capitol's security system. He consulted a security expert, who coached him on how to fool the Capitol's metal detectors, then smuggled a gun and a bullet past the check point and — as television cameras rolled for an Anderson documentary on terrorism — produced them in the office of Senator Robert Dole.

Some journalists thought Anderson had performed a valuable service. Others objected to his tactics. The committee of reporters that controls access to the Capitol press gallery, for example, censured Anderson for what they considered to be mere grandstanding.

*Steve Weinberg is executive director of Investigative Reporters & Editors, based at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and the author of Armand Hammer, The Untold Story.*

Anderson blasted back. "I am appalled," he wrote the Standing Committee of Correspondents, "that the congressional leaders, whose lives I wanted to protect, seem less concerned about the threat to their security than the political embarrassment I apparently caused them . . . . What dismays me the most, however, is that the Standing Committee . . . would allow themselves to be used to reprimand a colleague for pursuing an urgent story that happened to embarrass their political overseers."

Once again, Anderson had managed to annoy his colleagues by resorting to the often unorthodox tactics that have helped to make him king of the muckrakers, whose column appears in about half of the country's daily papers and whose radio and television broadcasts reach an audience of millions more.

Even a quick reading of opinion about Anderson illuminates the arguments over the reportorial techniques and ethics that have led to many of his scoops. The controversy is more than a tempest in a teapot. As the debate continues over whether investigative reporting is ailing or in good health, is poking into the right or wrong corners of society, is too influential or not influential enough, Anderson's career is especially instructive. For Jack Anderson represents the journalism of reform at its boldest and most problematic.

In a 1983 profile of Anderson, *Washington Post* staff writer Tony Kornheiser conveyed the ambivalence that almost every analyst of his output feels at one time or another. Kornheiser's theme was that Anderson's Washington Merry-Go-Round column of "tweaks, leaks, and piques" contains both "gold and garbage. Sometimes on the same day. Sometimes in the same sentence."

Despite the unevenness of his work, Anderson's muckraking cannot be treated lightly. Even a highly selective list of his scoops is astounding. His reporting:

- Weakened a rampant House Un-American Activities Committee and helped put its chairman, J. Parnell Thomas, in prison;

## Working without editors also meant there were no institutional pressures to stop him when he was wrongheaded

- Broke the news about the U.S. entry into the Korean War and criticized the conduct of that war by General Douglas MacArthur;
- Attacked Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist witchhunt, helping lead to his downfall;
- Publicized kickbacks to Federal Communications Commission member Richard Mack, who stepped down in disgrace;
- Revealed payoffs to Sherman Adams, President Eisenhower's chief aide, undercutting Adams's power;
- Called attention to money given by reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes to members of the Nixon family, probably contributing to Nixon's defeat by John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential campaign;
- Raised questions about the Gulf of Tonkin episode that President Johnson used to lead America deeper into the Vietnam War, and later revealed secret plans by the Nixon administration to broaden the war;



**Just checking:** Early this year, to prove a point, Anderson smuggled a gun through the Capitol's security system and, as TV cameras rolled, produced it in Senator Dole's office.



both: courtesy Orbis Communications

- Advertised the expensive foibles of numerous congressmen and senators, most notably Thomas Dodd, George Murphy, Adam Clayton Powell, and Mendel Rivers;
- Told of CIA plans to kill Fidel Castro, salvage the *Glomar Explorer*, overthrow left-wing Chilean ruler Salvador Allende, and listen in on Soviet officials as they radioed each other from their limousines in Moscow;
- Reported the Reagan administration's Iran-contra plotting before the mainstream media got on to the story.

Anderson's partisans recite such scoops with justifiable pride, but sometimes fail to acknowledge that his techniques might be ethically questionable. Anderson's detractors, on the other hand, have failed to pay enough attention to his impact, preferring to focus on the small number of his highly publicized errors which, they believe, have earned him a place in journalistic purgatory.

The partisans and detractors could, if they only would, extract important lessons from Anderson's career about how journalists should behave while trying to change society for the better. Anderson has always been up front about his reformist tendencies. The truth is, that's what most investigative journalists are all about, whether they admit it or not. When Jack Anderson used his remarkable network of sources to obtain secret White House transcripts pertaining to the India-Pakistan war in 1971, he scored more than an exclusive story. By disclosing the Nixon administration's surprising tilt toward Pakistan in that nation's battle with India, an ally of the U.S., Anderson brought an important foreign policy shift to the attention of the electorate. The disclosure helped prevent deeper secret U.S. involvement in the conflict. Nixon grumbled that, "from a diplomatic point of view, the leak was embarrassing; from the point of view of national security, it was intolerable." In general, though, Anderson was praised, and in 1972 he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

All of a sudden, Anderson achieved what had eluded him and other modern muckrakers — fame and respectability. He was pictured on the cover of *Time*, made the subject of a *Playboy* interview, and featured in a *New York Times Magazine* article that bore the headline "The Anderson Strategy: We Hit You — Pow! Then You Issue a Denial, and — Bam! — We Really Let You Have It." American journalism had lacked a hero for a long time. It looked as if Anderson was it.

At any rate, critics found it more difficult to dismiss him as a thoughtless scoop artist. It turned out, for example, that Anderson had indeed wrestled with the decision to reveal the administration's pro-Pakistan policy. As he explained in his 1973 memoir, *The Anderson Papers*: "Every president is entitled to secrecy in matters of national security, but this privilege does not allow him to deliberately deceive the American people. When I was persuaded that America was being misled, I asked my sources for documentary evidence that would also convince the public. I



arranged to meet my sources in crowded places where the secret papers could be passed quickly and inconspicuously. My sources turned over a dozen key documents. They were so explosive that I had to be sure they were not taken out of context. I pressed for more documentation, until I wound up with hundreds of supporting documents."

Anderson, who believes that what government conceals is more important than what it reveals, had cultivated sources for decades. His method for finding leakers was simple: he contacted mid-level professionals in large organizations. Over the decades Anderson had figured out how to encourage such nervous potential sources to come forward. "I like to keep a light burning in the window for the storm-tossed informer," he wrote in his memoir. "I signal to him from afar by championing his cause, by regularly printing exposés akin to his, by being accessible to the hushed voice on the phone, by periodically making public pledges to go to jail rather than reveal a source, by scandalizing the mighty so pervasively as to leave no doubt that, whether it's a peccadillo or a state secret, the Washington Merry-Go-Round is interested."

Anderson called the little-appreciated professionals regularly, not just when he needed something. They were flattered, and thus willing to help when he did need something. Usually, fearing they might otherwise lose their jobs, they remained anonymous. But Anderson worried little about the possibility that relying on unnamed sources might impair his credibility. He believed that sources who spoke for attribution often had nothing to tell but lies. Besides, it was the mid-level professionals — the ones who briefed the top executives — who provided the documents that could authenticate rumors.

It was such a document from such a source that gave Anderson another sensational story shortly after publication of his pieces on Pakistan. The document came from inside the multinational corporation ITT, and it indicated that the company had paid \$400,000 to the Republican party in exchange for an end to a Nixon administration antitrust lawsuit. The writer of the memo was ITT Washington lobbyist Dita Beard. The Nixon White House turned to the FBI, asking J. Edgar Hoover to declare the memo a forgery. After conducting tests, however, the bureau said it could not prove that the document had been forged. Anderson counterattacked, charging that Nixon's Attorney General-designate Richard Kleindienst had lied about the ITT affair. The Senate, which would ultimately approve Kleindienst, reopened its confirmation hearings.

Then, in July 1972, just months after breaking the Pakistan and ITT stories and shortly after winning his Pulitzer Prize, Anderson made a mistake that has shadowed him ever since. He ran with a story about alleged drunken-driving violations by Senator Thomas Eagleton, the vice-presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket headed by George McGovern. The charges helped to drive Eagleton off the ticket, left the McGovern campaign reeling, and virtually assured the reelection of Richard Nixon.

From one of his carefully cultivated sources, Anderson



both: UPI/Beitmann

**A hit and a miss:** In 1971 Anderson revealed the Nixon administration's secret tilt toward Pakistan in its battle with India, a U.S. ally. Nixon, shown here with Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, was furious. Anderson's 1972 exposé of Senator Thomas Eagleton's alleged drinking-driving violations did not hold up and the columnist was obliged to apologize. As a result of this and other revelations, Eagleton (right) withdrew as McGovern's running mate in the '72 presidential campaign.



had heard rumors of Eagleton's drinking as early as 1968, but, he wrote in his memoir, "I fell into the error I most condemn in my fellow reporters — the making up of reasons for not investigating, for not reporting." So, on deadline four years later, Anderson did a hurried job on the story.

There was a problem, though. All of his sources thought they knew the facts about Eagleton, but they were essentially confirming each others' hearsay. Anderson kept expecting the incriminating documents that everybody "knew" existed to arrive, but those documents — if they existed — did not arrive. Eventually, he apologized to Eagleton at a press conference.

Brit Hume, then one of Anderson's reporters, now ABC News's White House correspondent, said soon after the episode: "I admired Jack for taking his medicine publicly. But I felt . . . that I hadn't been dealing with the same man I had known the past several years. There was something about his compulsion to come up with something on the Eagleton story, about his stubbornness in backing away and his insensitivity to his own standards that was unfamiliar and unexpected."

The Eagleton affair made it clearer than ever that, despite Anderson's integrity, there were dangers in his playing by his own rules, in acting as his own referee. Other investigative journalists might chafe under questioning editors, but such built-in friction can lead to sounder stories. Anderson, like Drew Pearson before him, had chosen to

## The successes chalked up by investigative reporters are legion. Still, there are plenty of blind spots

work without editors. This sometimes meant uninhibited investigative reporting that might not have gotten into print anywhere else. It also meant there were no institutional forces to stop him when he was wrongheaded.

He was free to portray people as he pleased, and his targets could come off as unadulterated bad guys. He went through J. Edgar Hoover's trash, explaining that the purpose was to strip the FBI director of his divinity, as well as to burlesque techniques employed by the bureau. Anderson said Hoover's trash confirmed that the old man was a pitiful, scared human being who suffered from gas pains. Good journalism or not, the story put Anderson on the cutting edge of a discussion that continues today: When is it relevant to expose the private lives of public officials? Anderson's answer for decades had been, it's frequently relevant because there is rarely a neat separation between private behavior and public conduct. Did his colleagues believe a congressman who drinks too much in his office could function at top form during floor debate?

Anderson as a law unto himself was demonstrated again in 1973, even as he was still trying to regain the credibility lost as the result of the Eagleton debacle. Convinced that the Nixon White House was using grand jury secrecy to sweep the whole Watergate affair under the rug, the columnist decided to print transcripts from the grand jury investigating the break-in. "Normally, I would have hesitated . . .," he explained in *The Anderson Papers*, "for I respect the hallowed place that secrecy of grand jury proceedings holds under our system, but years of accumulated distrust of the Nixon presidency convinced me that it could not be trusted to prosecute its own members honestly unless the major facts were publicly and authentically known."

The Watergate prosecutors protested that Anderson's revelations were hindering their probe. After meeting with them, Anderson announced in his column that he would suspend publication of verbatim testimony, adding that "as a journalist I have an obligation and a right to continue to report any and all pertinent information on this sordid scandal that so many people in high places have worked so hard to keep from the public."

Such apparent arrogance disturbed many observers, including *Washington Post* political writer David Broder, who commented that "those who relay leaked information forget that we as journalists have just as much stake in the probity of the criminal justice system as any other citizens . . . . Several hundred American newspapers published Jack Anderson's columns containing verbatim transcripts of Watergate grand jury testimony. The rationalization one heard from editors was that somebody's going to publish it, whether I do or not. Not a single editor I know argued that the grand jury system could survive repeated disclosure of confidential testimony. Not a single editor contended that the rights of the accused persons can be protected if accusations made in that non-adversary forum are published.

Nonetheless, the leaked testimony was published — and to hell with the consequences."

By the time the Watergate grand jury was hearing testimony, the tone and scope of investigative journalism had already begun to change, a bit. The Vietnam War was, of course, the main catalyst. More and more journalists began to realize the truth of what Anderson had been saying all along — that institutional spokesmen lied regularly, challenging reporters to dig out the stark reality behind the rosy estimates. Seymour Hersh's reporting on the My Lai massacre in 1969, which was distributed by an obscure news service and which won a Pulitzer Prize, was an inspiration to would-be muckrakers. When Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein recounted their Watergate adventures in *All the President's Men* and *The Final Days*, journalism was altered forever.

The success of the media during Watergate meant a

## FROM MISSIONARY

When Jack Anderson — a former Mormon missionary born to a lower middle-class family in 1922 — showed up on Drew Pearson's doorstep in Washington, D.C., in 1947, Pearson was the most widely read political commentator in the world. Pearson hired the young man, despite his unimpressive journalistic credentials.

Filled with righteous indignation at the Gomorrah called Washington, D.C., the devout Mormon learned quickly at the feet of his combative Quaker mentor. Anderson soon adopted a style packed with punchy, value-laden words. In the column, Washington was populated by "bigwigs," "poohbahs," and "brasshats." *The New York Times* would never call a ruler, no matter how ruthless, "a pot-bellied potentate"; Anderson did. Many journalists considered his style sensationalistic; it was, in any case, distinctive and entertaining, keeping readers engrossed.

In 1952, Anderson, just thirty, emerged from Pearson's shadow by writing the first book-length exposé of Senator Joseph McCarthy's tactics and lies. Its success brought Anderson new sources as he continued his particular brand of muckraking, and those sources, in turn, led to new scoops. An article he wrote for *Parade* in 1963 on "Congressmen Who Cheat" became the subject of a House hearing, recessed in anger by its chairman after Anderson refused to name the member of Congress who had blown the whistle. Some congressmen wondered aloud whether such a source actually existed.

By then, Anderson expected his articles to create controversy. He noted that "investigative reporting isn't, of course, the best way to make friends. I have been booed, sued, accused, assaulted, denounced, bla-bla-balled, and in-

new role for investigative reporters and editors. Some of the resulting exposés led to shakeups of local power structures unthinkable a decade earlier. But much of the Watergate-inspired reporting was poorly conceived and dreadfully executed. Some of the weaknesses, ironically, had their roots in techniques similar to those used by Woodward and Bernstein to expose Watergate, including heavy use of anonymous sources; reporters identifying themselves in such a way that sources might fail to understand they were talking for publication; reporters wrongly interpreting silence from a source as confirmation of a sensitive point; avoiding taking notes during a sensitive interview but writing them later from memory, thus increasing the chance of inaccuracy; and approaching sitting grand jurors.

Eventually, the excesses abated somewhat. Today, investigative reporting is institutionalized in American newsrooms, as shown by a national study conducted by Stan Abbott, a former executive editor of the *Anchorage Daily News* (the paper won a Pulitzer Prize for public service reporting during his tenure), who is now editor of the news service of McClatchy Newspapers. Abbott points out, among other things, that investigative techniques are used

## TO MUCKRAKER

vestigated. I have been hauled before the Congress, hounded by the FBI, bawled out by presidents, threatened by gangsters . . . The democratic machinery should never run so smoothly and silently that the rumble of opposition becomes muffled. Let there be a few cogs that grate against the massive wheels of big government, big business, and big labor."

Such aggressiveness allowed Anderson to assume his mentor's mantle following Pearson's death in September 1969. Unlike Pearson and many other Washington journalists, however, Anderson shunned the cocktail-and-supper-party circuit, preferring to spend his free time with his wife, Olivia Farley, and their nine children. The conventional wisdom was that attendance at parties hosted by the powerful led to tips; Anderson held that the danger of being coopted outweighed any possible benefits. Meanwhile, his unconventional tactics kept on leading to scoops.

Breaking two major stories that embarrassed the Nixon administration earned Anderson a high place on Nixon's enemies list. The FBI and CIA placed him under clandestine surveillance. Anderson discovered the tails, though, and routed them by deploying an unconventional counterforce: "I unleashed my nine children to initiate their own surveillance of the surveillants. My junior sleuths not only located the cars but photographed them . . . The men with the binoculars ceased their vigil, perhaps demoralized by the countersnooping of my Katzenjammer paparazzi . . . Watch out, CIA! The kids on my block are ready for you!"

Today, the kids are all grown and Anderson is a grandfather. But he still has his network of informants and whistleblowers everywhere. S.W.

throughout the newsroom today — on beats and by general assignment reporters. Another vital sign is the decision by Cable News Network to assemble a team of about forty reporters, editors, and researchers to concentrate on special investigative projects. The network has already hired two highly respected journalists — Pam Hill of ABC News and John Camp of WBRZ in Baton Rouge.

The successes chalked up by investigative reporters are legion. Those successes have put crooked leaders in prison, saved innocent people from lives behind bars, caught killers on the loose, and inspired legislation designed to prevent wrongs brought to light by television and print reporters. In 1989 more journalists than ever are exposing systemic problems *before* a disaster occurs and are providing necessary context, as when reporters show how an entire court system is malfunctioning rather than focusing on just one miscarriage of justice. More journalists are following paper trails instead of relying totally on human sources, as computers help gather and analyze complex information.

Still, there are plenty of blind spots. Where were investigative journalists as influence peddling on a massive scale went on at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as savings and loan associations were looted of billions? Why did most of them miss the problems in NASA's space shuttle program that led to the Challenger disaster in 1986? Where are the investigations of law firms, universities, the business practices of private-sector employers, the workplace conditions that harm millions of Americans psychologically and physically?

Anderson has missed some of the big stories, too, but he is still publishing lots of important stories that other muckrakers are ignoring, and in many American towns he is still the only digger available on a regular basis to readers who care to look behind the veil of officialdom.

During 1989, Anderson, his heir apparent, Dale Van Atta, and their associates have told how members of Congress refuse to travel on commercial airlines, thus costing taxpayers extra millions of dollars; reported self-serving actions by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency administrator; delved into important but little-publicized issues such as the sale of cars stolen overseas to unsuspecting American buyers while government regulators look the other way; explained the workings of obscure groups, such as the National Archives panel deciding which of Richard Nixon's papers will be withheld from public view at his insistence; and taken up the cause of little guys, such as the black Army sergeant being harassed because he married a white soldier.

So, as Anderson nears seventy, his enterprise still sometimes sets the pace. The biggest change in his operation is one that, sadly, puts him in the mainstream. As Anderson explained in a recent interview, every column is now approved by lawyers before dissemination. This means that his unique brand of muckraking — like investigative journalism everywhere — is in danger of being watered down from fear of lawsuits, however frivolous they turn out to be. Drew Pearson, who revealed when a libel suit came along and refused to carry libel insurance, must be spinning in his grave. ♦



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# TV GUIDE THE SHAKE-UP

'Too cerebral,' said new owner Murdoch —  
and heads rolled ♦ BY KATHARINE SEELYE

For thirty-five years *TV Guide* thrived in happy obscurity. The diminutive magazine worked its way into American living rooms in the 1950s, with the first television sets, and stayed there unobtrusively, as integral (and nonthreatening) to the post-war culture as Ward and June Cleaver. As the number of TV sets soared, so did sales of *TV Guide*. Now, 98 percent of all American homes have at least one set, which in the average household is turned on for an eye-glazing six hours, fifty-five minutes a day, and *TV Guide* outsells every weekly magazine in the country. If television has become the national religion, then its bible is *TV Guide*.

The journalistic community took little notice of the magazine, however, until the August 7, 1988, announcement that Walter H. Annenberg, founder and proprietor, was selling his cash cow after more than three decades of one-man rule. The sale commanded attention not only because of the breathtaking \$3 billion price, but also because the buyer whom Annenberg had sought out was Rupert Murdoch, the Australia-born buccaneer who built his global media empire by appealing to the lowest common denominator.

Immediately, Murdoch swore in interviews that he wouldn't dream of tinkering with Annenberg's successful formula. Nor would he use *TV Guide* to promote his own commercial holdings, which include several television stations

and the Fox Broadcasting Company. "I'm not that silly," Murdoch told *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. "I paid a lot of money for that property. I'm not about to destroy its credibility. I plan no changes at all there."

The last issue to bear Annenberg's name on the masthead (December 17, 1988) carried a portent of things to come in a story titled "Do You Give Viewers Good Journalism — Or The Sensationalism They Prefer?" Studies cited in the piece showed that viewers of network news broadcasts far preferred human drama to the stories that reporters considered important. The story concluded, however, that a balance of the two was vital to maintaining viewer interest.

All too quickly, it seemed, Murdoch upset the balance that *TV Guide* had achieved. In a private meeting with editors shortly after the deal was closed, Murdoch pronounced the magazine "too cerebral." The new edicts: double the number of personality profiles, cut the length of stories, add more photos, and, of course, a horoscope. (In the December 31 issue, an astrologer informed readers that Uranus, the planet that rules television, was moving into a conservative phase, meaning viewers would soon be watching more law-and-order shows.) Suddenly devalued were the in-depth pieces that *TV Guide* writers had prided themselves on, stories that looked behind the screens at the decision-makers who control the medium and at the myriad ways they use and abuse it.

If the magazine harbored staffers too cerebral, Murdoch's arrival flushed many of them out. Within a year, three

of five writers in the New York bureau were gone, three of six in Hollywood, the only one in Washington, and the managing editor and the national co-editor at headquarters in Radnor, Pennsylvania. On the business side, about fifty people in the advertising promotion and research department lost their jobs when they refused to relocate from Radnor to New York. Thirty more lost their jobs in sales offices around the country.

Despite the upheaval, the new management insists that nothing has been lost. In the competitive environment of magazines, executives say, they are simply retooling an outmoded engine so they can better serve the reader and re-



GOOD QUESTION: But the story is light on analysis, heavy on cosmetics.

Katharine Seelye is a reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

## 'The magazine went from a certain seriousness to an undiluted frivolousness'

TOM SHALES, *The Washington Post*

capture those who strayed from *TV Guide* during the last decade. And some say that the changes have been effective. "There are signs of stabilization in circulation," says John S. Reidy, a publishing-industry analyst at Drexel Burnham Lambert. "This is the result of a combination of better marketing and better editorial product." At this rate, he adds, Murdoch's goal of boosting circulation from 16.3 million to near its peak of 19.6 million a decade ago "is well within reach within a year or so."

Few doubt that *TV Guide* will remain a financial success. The fear, especially among those who have left, is that by taking *TV Guide* downmarket Murdoch is undoing the years of work it took to give the magazine a critical edge.

"The decline was more rapid than I expected," says *Washington Post* TV critic Tom Shales. "The magazine went from a certain seriousness to an undi-

luted frivolousness. The whole thing is kind of swamped in star gush. It's a combination of drumbeating for the industry and gushing over people who are barely stars. It's beyond lightweight."

From its first issue, on April 3, 1953, when Lucille Ball and newborn Desi Arnaz, Jr., appeared on the cover, *TV Guide* has been in the business of promotion. "Our readers don't want to know what heels the stars are," Merrill Panitt, Annenberg's right-hand man, told *Newsweek* in May 1953. "We can't take TV apart, because the people who buy the magazine like it — and so do we."

Only when television grew more sophisticated did *TV Guide* do likewise. "As television had more of an impact on society," Panitt, still a contributing editor, recalled in a recent interview, "*TV Guide* reflected that." By the mid-1960s, Panitt was directing staff writers to examine how television reflected and, in turn, influenced changes in American culture. Editors solicited free-lance pieces. "Anybody who was anybody wrote for us, from John Updike to Bill Buckley," Panitt said. "They liked to because we wanted their viewpoints and we didn't put their copy through a meat grinder." And the pay — ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 for an article in the 1960s, from \$1,500 to \$3,000 today — wasn't bad for the amount of work involved.

While *TV Guide*'s program listings remained its bread and butter and while the magazine never abandoned its celebrity fluff and Hollywood hype, it also made a commitment to serious reporting. Its writers traveled to the world's hot spots, examining what television was up to and turning out solid pieces that often broke new ground. Typical stories: an analysis of the networks' failure to explain the underlying causes of famine in Africa; a two-part series on public broadcasting that led Congress to consider legislative changes; a four-part series on minorities and how television catered to white fears about blacks.

Perhaps the magazine's most famous story was its 1982 investigation by Sally

Bedell Smith and Don Kowett of the CBS documentary *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception*. Their story, "Anatomy of a Smear: How CBS News Broke the Rules and 'Got' Gen. Westmoreland," prompted Westmoreland's libel suit against the network.

While writers and editors say that Annenberg did not interfere with stories ("I never felt a tickle of intrusion," says Sally Bedell Smith, who left in 1982), on at least two occasions he did use the magazine for political ends. In 1974, Annenberg, a close friend of Richard Nixon, introduced *News Watch*, a column that monitored the fairness of network news. In reality, it was an outlet for conservative writers to vent their rage against the "elite" networks, and it was short-lived. And in 1980 Annenberg signed a commentary piece endorsing Ronald Reagan, another friend, for president, the only time in the magazine's history it endorsed a candidate.

By and large, however, *TV Guide* carried out its mission, which Panitt describes this way: "We felt we had to explain to the public that television was an advertising medium and explain to the industry that it was supposed to be an art form. We tried to speak for the viewer to the industry."

But like the baby boomers it guided through the domestic sitcoms of the 1950s, *TV Guide* in the 1980s was facing a midlife crisis. Advertising was in a slump. Circulation had been falling since the late '70s, mainly because of stiff competition from newspapers. The proliferation of cable, and of cable magazines, posed a continuing threat. Annenberg's 1988 price increase — from 60 cents to 75 cents — cut into sales, and the writers' strike that year also took a toll, turning away TV viewers, and, by extension, *TV Guide* readers. Television sets today are actually turned on fifteen minutes less than they were during the 1985-86 season, the all-time high. "People aren't as excited by television as they used to be," says R.C. Smith, the former managing editor, who left in May. "It's now taken

● They are slowly squeezing out media-monitoring stories. Murdoch thinks that's boring, sleepy journalism ●

R. C. Smith, former managing editor



CJR Ken Yanovak

for granted, like a utility."

And then there was the intangible — a sense both inside and outside the magazine that it had become complacent. "There's no question that *TV Guide* needed to be a livelier product," says Valerie Salembier, publisher for five months under Murdoch before she quit to become president of the *New York Post*. "I found a sleepy corporate culture there, and it needed to be energized."

To Joseph Cece, *TV Guide*'s new president, the challenge for *TV Guide* is to keep up with the growing number of viewer options by providing a definitive guidebook. In its search to become that guidebook, Cece adds, the Murdoch team holds nothing sacred, including *TV Guide*'s pint-sized pages. (Cece points out that the digest size was fine fifteen years ago when the average household received only a handful of channels. Now, however, the average household receives twenty-eight channels, a number that is expected to nearly double in the next few years. Cece adds that there are no immediate plans to change the page size.)

The Murdoch team quickly made several changes in production and format, many of which were lauded within the industry. These included slashing the lead time for features (from the editor's desk to the street) from more than forty days to twelve. All the features were moved to the front of the book to create a more cohesive package. And, to help the reader navigate through the mass of each day's listings, sections were added to highlight special shows.

The Murdoch crew considered it vital to relocate the advertising promotion and research department to New York and is planning to do the same with the two-dozen-member editorial staff in a year or so. "It's hard to be on top of the pulse of the television and entertainment business when you are [thirteen] miles outside of Philadelphia," Cece says. (The magazine's headquarters will remain in Radnor, a site chosen because it was close to Annenberg's estate. Most of the 800 Radnor employees will remain there, continuing to produce the program listings. The company employs a total of about 1,350 people, who put out 108 different editions across the country.)

Finally, the new team began a \$10 million ad campaign targeted to con-

sumers and a \$1 million trade campaign. The trade ads were designed to turn around the image of the *TV Guide* reader from what Cece calls "a couch potato who lives in a trailer park" to an upscale consumer. They play off the low-life image. "*TV Guide* readers shoot their dogs," says one, which shows a man with a video camera and makes a pitch to advertisers of home electronics. "*TV Guide* readers frequently go crackers," says another, pointing out that they consume more than 25 percent of all supermarket items sold. ("Advertisers, whet your appetites!")

The magazine also added several slick color pages of food coupons. Cece says that the coupons "add value to the package. If a reader spends 75 cents and there are \$5 or \$6 worth of shopping coupons in the magazine, that's added value." There was "absolutely no connection" between adding food coupons and printing stars' favorite recipes and the magazine's pitch to food advertisers, he says. Cece does acknowledge, though, that Murdoch's ownership of the company that prints the food coupon inserts is an example of the "synergy" that Murdoch envisions by owning multiple companies that can use each other's products.

*TV Guide* itself is another example. Its computerized inventory of thousands of sitcom plots and movie summaries provides an invaluable data base for other Murdoch media as American shows are distributed throughout the world. Already, Murdoch has launched a *TV Guide* in Britain. John Weisman, the magazine's former Washington bu-

reau chief — he quit in July — sees the data base as one of the main reasons Murdoch went into debt to buy *TV Guide*. "It's all part of a great vision," he says. "He'll make his money out of the software, down the road."

Financially, this first year of new ownership has produced mixed results. *TV Guide* is still the nation's top-selling weekly. (*Reader's Digest* and *Modern Maturity* sell more copies per issue, but both are monthlies. *Parade* isn't considered a competitor because it's included in Sunday newspapers; readers don't buy it separately or voluntarily.) Circulation for the first half of 1989 was 16.3 million, up a modest 27,000 from the end of 1988. Still, that's down 587,000, or 3.5 percent, from the same period a year before.

As for advertising revenues, according to the Publishers Information Bureau *TV Guide* sold \$70.8 million in ads in the second quarter of 1989, up 2.6 percent over the same period a year before. But the bureau also notes that by June 1989 *TV Guide*, which had been running neck and neck with *Time* in first place in ad revenues, had fallen back to fourth place, behind *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *People*. Cece counters that PIB numbers are only estimates. And, he says, because the new management discontinued the long-time practice of trading ad space in the magazine for free time on local stations, "You can't compare 1988 with 1989." In fact, he says, *TV Guide*'s ad revenues are up between 7 and 10 percent.

The number of ad pages, which in 1988 had fallen to their lowest point in

“There has developed an interesting, romantic notion of the pre-Murdoch *TV Guide* as *The New York Review of TV*”

Joseph Cece,  
president, *TV Guide*

CJ/RKen Yanovak





## For some, the magazine represents an enormous opportunity, and a few new writers have been hired

five years, was down 7.6 percent for the first half of 1989 from a year ago, according to the PIB. Again, Cece counters that, if one excludes the pages that *TV Guide* traded away, ad pages are down only between 1 and 2 percent. "The fourth quarter is already looking so strong," he says, "that by the end of the year we'll wind up ahead."

Richard Kostyra, U.S. director of media services for J. Walter Thompson, agrees that the future bodes well for *TV Guide*. "The need for a comprehensive guide is increasing rather than diminishing," he says. "The viewer has so many options nowadays that a complete guide is essential."

If the business-side moves are proving successful, those made on the editorial side have wreaked havoc. To the old guard, the magazine has lost its sense of mission and is losing those qualities that distinguished it from other entertainment pulp.

Richard Turner, the former West Coast bureau chief, who left in January, says that he didn't automatically dread Murdoch's arrival. "I have some grudging

respect for Murdoch," he says. "He's a visionary. He thinks in active, global terms. Contrast that with Annenberg's farm, which was very paternalistic, a private company run by an eighty-year-old man who was buying art. It wasn't part of anything larger. But despite Murdoch's global vision, he comes from a very specific journalistic tradition, and he reverted to form."

R.C. Smith, the former managing editor, says that Murdoch and his team don't understand American magazines. "When you look at the magazines with big circulations — *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide*, *National Geographic* — the reason for their success is their respectability. You can't have something in that many American homes and not have it be perceived as something that's improving."

"Since the takeover," Smith goes on, "they are slowly squeezing out the kind of story we would make our lead — media-monitoring stories. Murdoch thinks that's boring, sleepy journalism, and what you need is 'Is TV Getting Too Sexy?' We did those stories, too, but it's a question of proportion and balance."

A May 23, 1989, memo from managing editor Dick Friedman told the magazine's three bureau chiefs: "We feel that the overwhelming majority of our pieces require no more than two weeks to report and write." Weisman, the former Washington bureau chief, sees in that memo "a chilling effect and the death of the old-style *TV Guide* reporting. The majority of our pieces took more than two weeks to report. Even if you were doing a simple profile you would interview twenty-five people, because you wanted to capture the soul of the subject." The underlying message of Friedman's memo, he says, is that original reporting isn't valued, that it's okay to write from clips.

Stories that once might have offered insight now reflect a superficial spin, and they often fail to deliver at that. In "TV's New News Queens: How Good Are They?" almost all the comments deal with cosmetics, almost none with journalism.

Or stories carry that faint odor of the kind of conflict Murdoch vowed he would avoid. "In Defense of Tabloid TV" promoted shows such as Fox's *Morton Downey Jr. Show* and *A Current Affair* and excoriated journalists from "the Turgid Triangle of Imperial Journalism" who look down on trash TV — and, by implication, on Murdoch. The piece was written by former CBS president Van Gordon Sauter, whose move to Los Angeles as an independent producer, *The Village Voice* pointed out, "means that the good opinion of Fox executives is scarcely unimportant to him."

Astonishingly, *TV Guide* this summer completely ignored a major issue in broadcast news — ABC News's highly controversial use of a simulation (initially unannounced to viewers) of an alleged U.S. spy handing a briefcase to a Soviet agent.

That omission was followed by the unfortunate August 26 cover, which showed a foxy Oprah Winfrey in a gauzy dress perched on a pile of cash. It turned out that Winfrey's face had been superimposed on the svelte form of Ann-Mar-

### ● The philosophy of the magazine is that shorter stories and more personalities will make us livelier ●

David Sendler, then co-editor, now former co-editor



CJR Ken Yancovick



gret. This led some media critics to speculate that the real Winfrey wasn't sexy enough for the new *TV Guide*.

To the magazine's old guard, Murdoch has thrown out the baby with the bath water, and resentment runs deep. Weisman, who worked for *TV Guide* for sixteen years, fairly bristles with fury when recounting the change from aggressive reporting to froth. "They used to say, 'Go get 'em, John Boy,'" he recalls. "They don't say that now."

**R**oger Wood, who revamped the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *New York Post* when Murdoch owned them and who directs the editorial side of *TV Guide*, doesn't give interviews. So the task of explaining Murdoch's editorial policy fell until recently to David Sendler, the magazine's co-editor who oversaw the national section and reported to Wood.

About two weeks after Sendler spoke with this reporter, he was out of the editor's job. A statement from *TV Guide* said that he had resigned but would remain as a consulting editor. Sendler would not elaborate on the statement, but friends said he was forced out. They added that Sendler, on staff since 1976 and highly regarded by his writers, had been at odds with the new management since the takeover. (Three days after Sendler's departure was announced, writer Doug Hill resigned from the New York bureau. On September 25, the company announced that it had hired as its national editor Joe R. Robinowitz, the thirty-eight-year-old general manager of WFX-TV, the Fox-owned station in Boston. Robinowitz had previously been editor-in-chief of the *Boston Herald*. His entire journalistic career has been within Murdoch's empire.)

As co-editor, Sendler had defended the Murdochization of the magazine: "The philosophy is that we're in the business to sell magazines, and the philosophy is that shorter stories and more personalities will help us sell more magazines and make us livelier."

He said he found the Sauter piece, "In Defense of Tabloid TV," provocative and in no way a conflict of interest. Asked why *TV Guide* failed to cover the ABC simulation, he said the magazine's deadlines would have made it impossible to do so in a timely manner: "We would

have had to find a second-day angle, and we didn't have one."

As for the Oprah Winfrey cover, it had nothing to do with the magazine's new management, Sendler said. A freelance artist, assigned to come up on short notice with a "glamorous Winfrey on a pile of money," found an old picture of Ann-Margret in just the right pose and copied it — "too literally," Sendler said that the artist was advised that such composites are against company policy.

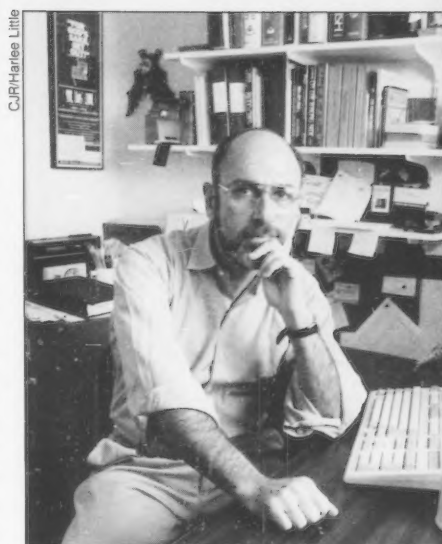
Both Sendler and Cece took strong issue with the complaint that *TV Guide* has abandoned its watchdog role. "The same critical pieces, the same thought pieces are there," Cece said. "If Father Hesburgh [retired president of Notre Dame] writes a piece on how television tends to be a great medium for exposing the phoniness of people, if that story is eleven pages long or three pages, the notion of that article is still the same. It's just as thoughtful, just not as long."

"There has developed an interesting, romantic notion of the pre-Murdoch *TV Guide* as *The New York Review of TV*," he added. "Here you have the masses of all mass-circulation magazines covering the masses of all mass media, and all of a sudden it's being made into something it probably never was."

**N**ot all the traffic at *TV Guide* these days is outward bound. For some, the magazine represents an enormous opportunity, and a few new writers have been hired.

Monica Collins was lured from her job as TV critic at *USA Today* to write a column every two weeks for *TV Guide* while working at Murdoch's *Boston Herald*. "TV Guide remains *TV Guide*," she says. "It's the bible of the industry. Publications go through new owners all the time and have convulsions with those changes. But I feel it's an institution." She says "the sky's the limit" in her column. "I'll be identifying trends, writing strongly reported critical pieces, trying to set an agenda." She says she has received assurances that she would have editorial independence. Of the exodus of editors and writers, Collins says, "A lot of it is a natural evolution. The change in ownership provides people who have been thinking about leaving an opportunity to explore that."

Still, the turmoil of the last year has



John Weisman,  
former Washington bureau chief

● They used to say,  
"Go get 'em, John Boy."  
They don't  
say that now ●

not yet ebbed. Few current employees, few in the industry, even few people who had already quit wanted to talk on the record for this article. The reason for most was fear — fear that alienating *TV Guide* could hurt their careers.

As became clear in *Time* magazine's May 29 story, "The Tarring Up of *TV Guide*," management doesn't take kindly to employees who talk to reporters. Managing editor Smith, who had already given notice that he was leaving, was fired when Cece learned he had talked to *Time*. (Cece says he saw "no point in someone who is trashing the magazine and the management to stay until his designated resignation date. But the notion that he was fired for speaking to the press is nonsense.")

Industry reps and agents are reluctant to talk because a mention in *TV Guide* for their clients is still a plum. As one industry watcher put it, "TV Guide is still the 800-pound gorilla."

That may be. But it's a more gullible gorilla. While the old *TV Guide* showed a bracing skepticism toward the industry, the new *TV Guide* is clearly more eager to join in the hype. ♦

# BLACK JOURNALISTS,

At the black journalists' convention, the hot issues were tainted money, CIA recruiting, and the problems that come with growing power ♦ BY AUDREY EDWARDS

Its founders like to joke that when the National Association of Black Journalists held its first meeting in 1975, members could just as easily have assembled in a phone booth, so paltry were the numbers then of blacks in the profession of journalism. In point of fact, forty-two were present at that meeting (which would have required at least a couple of dozen phone booths). They had come together convinced that the time was right for black journalists to organize — to challenge racism in American media, to agitate for change in the areas of access, employment, management opportunities; in sum, in the words of John Russwurm, founding editor of *Freedom's Journal*, America's first black newspaper, to "plead our own cause."

To a large extent the National Association of Black Journalists has proved to be successful in pleading the cause of the black journalist during these past fourteen years. But it is something of a paradoxical feature of black professional life that success almost invariably turns out to be one of those ambiguities that is sometimes suspect, always open to question.

When the NABJ held its fourteenth annual convention in New York this past summer, it drew more than 1,800 black journalists from every region of the

*Audrey Edwards is editor-at-large for Essence magazine and an adjunct professor of magazine writing at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism. She has served as regional director for the National Association of Black Journalists and was a founding member of the New York Association of Black Journalists. She is currently co-authoring a book on black success.*

country, from Caribbean nations, and from Africa. Since that first meeting in 1975 the organization had grown into a fairly well-connected and well-heeled professional association with a membership of 2,000, a full-time national staff of five, and a sophisticated network of chapter affiliates in thirty-five cities. More significantly, perhaps, the association has raised more than \$500,000 in annual operating funds — what NABJ officers like to call its "war chest" — that finance a wide range of scholarship and membership programs.

All of which leads to a touchy question: To what extent does a black professional association compromise its moral integrity by being financially dependent upon the institutions it is seeking to change? Would the association call a general boycott, for example, of a newspaper that is a funding source for some of the organization's activities?

It is no secret that the National Association of Black Journalists has, from the beginning, received much of its funding from the white media organizations that employ most of its members. And the issue of how NABJ defines itself — and is perceived by others — is increasingly being tied to how it conducts its fundraising. Can blacks of any profession expect to lie down with Massa and get up pure? The question is an especially pointed one for black journalists, since they are working in a profession that is based on a commitment to independence, integrity, and balance.

The NABJ leadership finds no contradiction between the association being an advocate for change on the one hand — more blacks in the newsroom, more

blacks in management positions, more coverage of issues affecting the black community — and a supplicant for dollars on the other. "Very early on NABJ took the position that we should receive some of this money from media companies as a matter of right," says Tom Morgan, who was elected president of the association last August and is currently a Nieman fellow on leave from *The New York Times*, where he heads the paper's Brooklyn bureau. "In most instances, sizable numbers of the readership or viewership of these media come from the black community. We give them our dollars on a regular basis, so we feel we are entitled to a percentage of the corporate giving."

Most of the fundraising is focused on the NABJ convention, which last year brought in 68 percent of the association's total operating revenues through registration fees and a \$500 charge for a recruiting booth (there were over one hundred such booths last summer). The convention has become over the years a lavish five-day event, with glittering social functions as well as serious workshops and opportunities for making important professional contacts. The NABJ awarded \$25,000 in scholarships this year — a dramatic contrast to the single scholarship for \$1,000 it gave just six years ago — and it administers an internship program that this year placed thirteen black journalism students in media positions. It has also joined forces with three other minority professional media associations — the Native American Press Association, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and

# WHITE MONEY

the Asian American Journalists Association — to plan a joint conference in Atlanta in 1994. Its seminars, begun a little over a year ago, are designed to give members the extra training and management skills that should help them to move up within the industry.

All of these initiatives take money, of course, and lots of it, a fact that has compelled the NABJ to solicit funding from white media organizations. Such dependence can have controversial consequences. This past summer, for instance, there was the matter of the New York chapter's acceptance of a \$35,000 contribution from the New York *Daily News* to help fund the convention's annual banquet, which cost an estimated \$75,000.

Now the truth is, the *Daily News* — along with other media giants such as Gannett, The Washington Post Company, The New York Times Company, the Times Mirror Company, Knight-Ridder, and ABC — has sponsored a number of NABJ convention events over the years. Gannett, for instance, has become the perennial sponsor for the annual W.E.B. DuBois Luncheon, estimated to cost upwards of \$50,000.

And The New York Times Company, which also traditionally sponsors a luncheon, this year hosted a reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to welcome the NABJ convention. Such largesse is, of course, excellent p.r. for white media companies, since it gives the impression that the giants do care about black journalists.

The issue with the *Daily News*, then, was not one of money per se, but what the money symbolized. The *Daily News*, after all, had not only been sued by four of its own black employees for discrimination in hiring, promotions, and pay, but had also been found guilty of discrimination in 1987; a settlement provided for an award of damages to the plaintiffs reported to be \$3.1 million. This made the *News* the first newspaper in U.S. history to be convicted of racism in its newsroom. For black journalists to

accept a contribution from such "convicted racists," was, in the words of Dave Hardy, lead plaintiff in the suit, "a sin unforgivable before God." Hardy, who raised the issue at a convention planning meeting last spring, continues to accept a paycheck from the *Daily News* as a reporter in the paper's New Jersey bureau.

It is precisely this kind of ethical ambiguity that makes it difficult for black journalists to always plead the cause with convincing honor. "If you're going to talk about not taking money from a white news institution because it's racist, then we shouldn't be taking money from any of these organizations," contends Charles Moses, a former *Newsday* reporter who served as co-chair of the convention and became the fall guy when Hardy went to the black press with his attack on the New York chapter for selling out. "I mean, let's admit it," Moses continues. "The *Times* has been sued by its black reporters — they just didn't go to court. There have been problems with most of these media organi-

zations when it comes to their black employees."

Joel Dreyfuss, an associate editor at *Fortune* magazine and one of the black journalists present at that first NABJ meeting in 1975, says that refusing to accept money from the *Daily News* would have been an effective way "to say to an organization that you have mismanaged your racial problem. By accepting their money, they [the *News*] are being told they are no worse than anybody else." Dreyfuss contends that what makes the *News* worse was its failure to keep the suit out of court, thus demonstrating its "ineptness" in handling its racial problems.

The decision by the New York chapter to accept the contribution led to furious attacks in New York City's black press, most notably the Brooklyn-based *City Sun* newspaper and the radio talk-show station WLIB-AM, both of which railed against "Afro-fascists" who would sell their very souls for a convention banquet. (Neither company has ever contributed to the NABJ conventions or



**The NABJ convention has become an extravaganza, with lavish social events as well as serious workshops and opportunities for professional contacts**

*Ed Bradley (left) of CBS presents CNN anchor Bernard Shaw with Journalist of the Year award*



been a member of the organization, by the way.) Perhaps the most painful part of the *Daily News* controversy is that it revealed the tendency of the black press to automatically view as suspect black journalists who work for the white press, a reaction possibly prompted by resentment of the fact that most black news organizations lack the resources to attract these same journalists.

Another controversy was occasioned by an unsettling discovery — that the Central Intelligence Agency had purchased a booth at the convention's jobs fair. The reaction was outrage. Members voted to return the CIA's jobs' booth fee — though this didn't happen until the fourth day of the convention, during the annual business meeting. "The sentiment of the organization was that it wanted no part of the government's money — there was the feeling that it was tainted," explains NABJ president Tom Morgan. (The CIA did not reciprocate by returning any journalists it may have recruited.)

Some NABJ members wryly noted that the CIA presence is perhaps another indication of just how significant the organization has become — black journalists being sought after as intelligence operatives could indeed be viewed as a measure of their perceived influence. However, according to NABJ executive director Carl Morris, who authorized the CIA's participation as a recruiter, the agency was interested in recruiting black journalists for various writing positions on its publications. "They called us," Morris says, "we didn't go out and solicit them." Morris contends that since the NABJ has no clear policy regarding who should and should not be a recruiter, he didn't consider the CIA to be any less inappropriate than the U.S. Information Agency, which was also present at the convention, though as an exhibitor, not a job recruiter. "I know the CIA's being there caused some consternation among members," Morris says, "but I also understand that one hundred plus résumés were left at the CIA booth, so what does that tell you?"

As often happens when an organization grows in size and influence, members don't always agree over what constitutes conflict of interest. Running for office in the NABJ, for instance, once a fairly simple undertaking that in-

involved calling up some friends and asking them to vote for you, has now become an increasingly sophisticated and costly enterprise that is also raising questions about financing. This year's election race between Tom Morgan and his two opponents — Ruth Allen Ollison, assistant news director at television station WTTG, a Fox station in Washington, D.C., and Robert Tutman, a cameraman for CBS News — drew accusations from Tutman that Morgan and Ollison had the financial backing of their respective employers, implying that this made them susceptible to the charge of being bought.

Morgan, however, says his total campaign expenditures came to between \$4,000 and \$5,000, "with roughly half of that coming from me and the other half from friends and supporters." And while the *Times* agreed to pay Morgan's way to board-sponsored conferences when he became treasurer six years ago, it "never contributed a cent to my campaign for NABJ president," he says. Ollison, who ran an impressive direct-mail campaign, was reported to have spent nearly \$10,000 on her bid to become the first woman elected president of the NABJ. She denied during the candidates' forum held at the convention that the Fox company had paid for most of that bill, as was rumored.

**W**hat such charges, valid or not, point to is the increasing vulnerability that people who were once "outsiders" face as they succeed in becoming "insiders." Does success always imply "selling out"? Of course not, but the suspicion is always there whenever the traditionally powerless begin to assume power.

The power and influence that the NABJ has assumed over the last fourteen years are undeniably real. When the Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorder recommended the integration of American media as a prescription for reducing urban violence more than twenty years ago, blacks accounted for less than 1 percent of the newsroom employees working for the white press. Today they make up 4.1 percent of the editorial staff in newsrooms and about 7.7 percent in broadcast stations, a growth certainly influenced by the existence of the NABJ.

Perhaps the real strength of the National Association of Black Journalists lies in the fact that it has always been a truly mass organization that can draw upon diverse strengths — whether it be from its low-key yet enormously successful chapter in Dallas, which was awarding \$15,000 in scholarships at a time when the national organization was giving only one scholarship for \$1,000; or from its brash, uppity New York local, which had the clout to get New York City to provide an entire subway train and a police escort to take members to the Apollo Theatre for its annual awards show during the convention. "NABJ is not an elitist association that seeks to enroll only those people who want to sue, or only those people who want to have conventions, or only the politically aware," says Les Payne, assistant managing editor at *Newsday* and a 1974 Pulitzer Prize winner who was an NABJ founding member and its fourth president. "We came together to share experiences. We are not a vanguard organization, but those who started it were in the vanguard of confronting racism at their papers or stations."

And now as it enters its fifteenth year the National Association of Black Journalists faces some crucial strategic and philosophical decisions: Should it continue to seek financial support from the very institutions it was created to challenge and run the risk of being compromised, or should it perhaps seek the kind of credibility that comes from being financially self-supporting? To a large extent the answer will depend on how much financial responsibility NABJ members are willing to assume for their own organization. Current dues, for instance, are only \$50 a year (less than half what other black professional associations such as the National Conference of Black Lawyers and the National Medical Association charge their members), and they have been raised only once in fourteen years.

The issue of money is ultimately linked to the issue of power: who calls the shots, not just in the newsroom where blacks still must agitate against racism to become full participants in the day-to-day telling of history, but also in the professional organizations designed to advance the interests of black journalists. ♦



# LOOK WHO'S EYEING (AND BUYING) ISRAEL'S NEWSPAPERS

Hard pressed for cash, the country's pro-Labor papers are a target for foreign investors who side with the hawkish Likud ♦ BY LEON T. HADAR

**T**he 1977 election in Israel brought to power Menachem Begin and his conservative Likud party and sent the centrist left-wing Labor party, which had governed Israel for more than half a century, to the opposition benches. But for the winning coalition of the radical right-wing and orthodox religious parties, this was only a partial victory. A powerful foe remained at large — the left-leaning press, a constant critic of the conservatives and the hawkish members of the ruling coalition whose radical political agenda included — and still includes — the annexation of "Judea and Samaria" (the Biblical terms for the occupied West Bank) to the Jewish state.

Time and again the media wing of the so-called Leftist Mafia has harried the government. In 1982, the year Israel invaded Lebanon, critical reporting helped compel the army to withdraw from the war-ravaged country. The Israeli press reported uninhibitedly on a series of scandals involving the nation's security forces (one newspaper, *Hadashot*, was

closed down for several days for ignoring the censor's order not to publish one such story). More recently, the Israeli media have been accused of abetting the cause of the Palestine Liberation Organization through their coverage of policies employed by the government to deal with the Palestinian uprising, the intifada.

The Likud has been able to neutralize one significant segment of the news media through its control of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, which includes public radio and television (there are no commercial stations). Uri Porat, who served as a press aide to Prime Minister Begin before being appointed director general of the IBA in 1984, imposed restrictions on coverage of the uprising and sacked IBA staff members perceived as being too liberal.

But the print press — owned by companies or families with close ties to the political left and center — has continued to remain a problem for the Likud. Now, however, it seems increasingly likely that marketplace pressures will resolve this problem in a way that political pressure has been unable to.

Recently, to the surprise of many Israeli journalists and others, a number of Israeli publications have found themselves in the unusual position of being coveted and fought over by foreign busi-

nessmen, several of whom support the Likud's conservative policies. This might seem to be merely another instance of the globalization of the media market, yet whereas the underlying motive behind most foreign takeovers is primarily economic, here the driving force would seem to be predominantly political. A Jewish proverb says that "the righteous, their work is always done by others." In this case, what the Likud would like to see happen seems to be taking place without any effort whatsoever on its part.

Last year the Union of Daily Newspapers, a publishers' association, took out an ad in the country's leading papers stating that the "newspaper market is facing a collapse" and has reached "the end of the road." Without an increase of about 40 percent in the price of newspapers, the text declared, "the newspapers will not survive." Many newspapers raised their prices — a measure that has kept them in business, for a time anyway.

Like newspapers in the United States and Western Europe, Israel's newspapers are undergoing a decline in readership at a time when labor costs are rising. Israel's continuing economic crisis compounds the problem, and the future is hardly rosy. A commercial cable television system — a new rival for the

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*Leon T. Hadar has served as the New York correspondent for The Jerusalem Post and Al Hamishar and as the Washington bureau chief of Hadashot. He currently teaches political science at The American University in Washington, D.C.*

# For Genger to buy half of *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*'s stock was like Jesse Helms buying a half-interest in *The Nation*

public's attention — is scheduled to be operational in the early 1990s. Israel's print media are caught up, then, in a fierce struggle for survival, a struggle that will leave only one or two of the country's major dailies on the scene.

One survival strategy that has been adopted by many publishers is to make their papers over into rough equivalents of *USA Today*, offering their readers short news stories, large headlines, lots of photos, and a bland editorial position. Publications that specialize in investigative reporting and critical political analysis are an endangered species. Thus, for example, *Koteret Rashit*, an anti-Likud weekly modeled after the French *L'Express*, folded this past January after seven years of publication. Nachum Barnea, its editor, says its elite Ashkenazi (European Jewish) readership

simply could not provide a viable economic base for the paper.

Meanwhile, the sixty-five-year-old *Davar* — one of Israel's most respected dailies, *Davar* is owned by the trade union Histadrut, which is affiliated with the Labor party — is being kept alive only by means of large financial infusions from Histadrut-owned industries. Ironically, most of Israel's workers, the target audience of the paper, are either Arabs from the occupied territories or lower-middle class Jews of Sephardi (or Middle East) background who vote for the Likud.

The four Hebrew-language dailies that dominate the market — *Ha'aretz*, often referred to as *The New York Times* of Israel, *Ma'ariv*, *Yediot Ahronot*, and *Hadashot* — tend, like the English-language daily, *The Jerusalem Post*, to be

sympathetic to the Labor party agenda.

A maverick among the media is *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*, a fifty-three-year-old weekly whose publisher and editor, the bearded Uri Avneri, is in many ways the *enfant terrible* of the Israeli press. Avneri's muckraking publication has, over the years, exposed corruption in high places, taken on some of the most sacred institutions in Israeli political life, and generally upheld an ultra-liberal political agenda, including support for negotiations with the PLO and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Avneri shocked the Israeli government and the public, too, when he met with and interviewed PLO chairman Yassir Arafat in Beirut during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Shortly after becoming editor of *Ha'olam Ha'zeh* in 1951, Avneri began to develop the so-called two-covers strategy, a unique Israeli media concept designed to appeal to both the university professor and the greengrocer. The front cover of the paper would focus on a major political issue, while the back cover might display a naked woman or a figure involved in some society scandal. The formula worked and *Ha'olam Ha'zeh* became a profitable enterprise with political clout. Avneri won a seat in the Knesset and served for several years. In the late '60s, however, young reporters at mainstream publications were emulating *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*'s style of aggressive reporting; at the same time, as sexual permissiveness spread to the Jewish state, bare breasts seem to have lost their former appeal. (Bob Guccione, publisher of *Penthouse*, is betting that they have not. In July, Guccione established a partnership with a left-wing political monthly, *Monitin*, which he then turned into a Hebrew-language and Middle East edition of *Penthouse*.)

By 1980, declining readership and advertising had forced Avneri to look for new investors. Enter Arie Genger. An Israeli who emigrated to the United States in the early '60s "with \$300 in his pocket," as he told a *Ha'aretz* reporter, Genger met in New York another Israeli emigrant who had struck it rich in America — Meshulam Riklis. Riklis,



courtesy Ha'olam Ha'zeh

**ODD COUPLE:** Uri Avneri (above left), editor of *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*, regularly blasted Arie Genger (above right), an ally of Ariel Sharon. Early this year Genger bought 50 percent of the paper's shares. Avneri's paper (right) is famous for its "two cover" format designed to appeal to both high-brow and low-brow readers.



a successful businessman whose recent marriage to film actress Pia Zadora had won him attention in American gossip magazines, was — and is — a close friend of Ariel Sharon, whose political campaigns he has helped to finance. In late 1981, Riklis introduced Genger to Sharon, who, during a lunch at The '21' Club in Manhattan, persuaded Genger to return to Israel and work for him as a department head in the defense ministry.

Genger's return did not go unnoticed. The Israeli press, led by *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*, launched a vigorous attack against Genger, arguing that an Israeli who had "abandoned" the country should not be put in charge of sensitive defense industries. Avneri, whose editorials have made it clear that he regards Sharon as Israel's public enemy number one, referred to Genger as "Sharon's Gangrene." Stung by such criticism, Genger returned to New York.

But not for long. Back in the U.S., Genger started putting out feelers, expressing an interest in buying or investing in one or another of Israel's financially hard-pressed papers. Finally, early this year, in a classic case of economic interests overcoming political differences, Avneri agreed to sell 50 percent of the company's stock to Genger and his associates, and a board of directors — half of them representing the Avneri group, the other half representing the Genger group — was formed. It was as though a business and political partner of Senator Jesse Helms or Pat Robertson were to purchase a half interest in *The Nation*, say, or *Mother Jones*.

**A**vneri insists that the paper maintains its "political independence." One concession to his new partners, however, is a four-page section called "Another Opinion," in which an assortment of right-wing columnists propagate their views. There's another change: the old political-warrior style has been supplanted by a kinder, gentler treatment of Sharon and the right.

Few observers doubt that Sharon and Genger, despite the latter's insistence that he is interested in the media for purely business reasons, hope at some point to turn *Ha'olam Ha'zeh* into an organ on which they can play their own political tune. What an irony, wrote He-



**HELPING HAND:** British press tycoon Robert Maxwell (left), shown here with Ma'ariv editor Ido Dissentshik, bought one-third of Ma'ariv's stock — then tried to buy *The Jerusalem Post*.

dah Boshes, a columnist for *Ha'aretz*, "Genger and Sharon are penetrating and taking hold of the print media through *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*, their archenemy."

But Genger — and, presumably, Sharon — was not content with this relatively minor incursion into the media. The next target was *The Jerusalem Post*, Israel's only English-language daily and the one most frequently quoted in foreign publications, a matter of considerable importance to Sharon, who is very sensitive to his image abroad.

Founded in 1932 by Gershon Agronsky, an American-Jewish journalist and Zionist activist, the paper was for many years little more than a mouthpiece for the Zionist leadership and, later, for a succession of Labor-led governments. Conceived of as a means of influencing opinion in London, until 1948 when Israel achieved independence, and later in Washington, the paper was edited by high-ranking officials of the Labor party; sensitive editorials and even news stories had to be approved by the foreign ministry or the prime minister's office.

The paper, which is owned by a subsidiary of the Labor-controlled Histadrut, gained political independence after 1977, when Labor moved to the opposition benches. Under the editorial direction of Ari Rath and Erwin Frankel, the *Post* adopted a dovish, liberal posi-

tion, one that was invariably critical of Likud's policies.

While its circulation within Israel is relatively small (daily: 25,000; week-ends: 45,000), it is reportedly the first newspaper the American ambassador and *The New York Times's* bureau chief read every morning, and its international edition (60,000) reaches an influential readership in capitals throughout the world. For the past two years the *Post* and the Israeli right have clashed head on, with Jewish settlers in the West Bank (many of whom are immigrants from the U.S.) blasting the paper for what they regard as sympathetic coverage of the Palestinian uprising.

Last year the *Post* lost 388,000 shekels (about \$200,000). Early this year, with the Histadrut facing a financial crisis, its subsidiary decided that it was time to sell 55 percent of the paper's stock, whose value was estimated at around \$1.5 million.

This proved to be a wildly low estimate as efforts by political and business forces eventually jacked up the price of the control stocks to more than \$20 million. The bidding started in December 1988 with Ampal, a New York subsidiary of an Israeli bank owned by the Histadrut, offering a modest \$900,000 for the control stock. Among the fourteen suitors were an Australian-Jewish busi-

# Sharon's allies are now said to be pinning their hopes on another foreign publisher — Rupert Murdoch

nessman, Richard Pratt (\$3 million), and U.S. News publisher Mortimer B. Zuckerman (\$3.8 million). Three of the most serious suitors were Genger, British press tycoon Robert Maxwell, and Hollinger, Inc., a Canadian-based newspaper chain that owns, among other properties, three conservative British publications, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Encounter*, and *The Spectator*. Its president, David Radler, who conducted the negotiations in Israel, is a member of the Canadian Conservative party.

Since the *Post* seemed an unlikely source of profit, the assumption in the *Post* newsroom was that the paper was facing a major political threat. Paradoxically, the most threatening of the three suitors, in the eyes of many, was Maxwell, who calls himself a Social Democrat and who is a supporter of the British Labour party, and was in fact a Labour member of Parliament from 1964 to 1970. However, when it comes to Israel's foreign policy, Maxwell, like many liberal and even left-wing American and West European Jews, tends to be almost as hawkish as Ariel Sharon.

Maxwell had already succumbed to the urge to buy into the Israeli media market. The paper that had attracted his interest was *Ma'ariv*, Israel's respected evening newspaper which, after years of being a circulation leader, had fallen far behind *Yediot Ahronot*, a low-brow tabloid. The 1983 launching of an even lighter-weight tabloid, *Hadashot* (published by the Schocken family, which owns *Ha'aretz* and an international publishing house), exacerbated *Ma'ariv*'s problems. In 1985 press accounts put the paper's monthly losses at between \$100,000 and \$200,000; several reporters and editors were fired that year and there was speculation that the paper was up for sale. In 1986, a new editor was appointed — Ido Dissentshik, a former Washington correspondent and son of the paper's late editor, Arie Dissentshik. The new man in charge, hoping to revitalize the paper, signaled his interest in new investors. It was Maxwell who, in February 1988, following negotiations with several Israeli and foreign

businessmen, emerged as the paper's savior, willing to buy about one-third of *Ma'ariv*'s stock.

It didn't take long for Israelis to gain some insight into Maxwell's management style. Appearing at a press conference with Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir on the occasion of an international Jewish conference, Maxwell was asked for his reaction to a story that had appeared earlier that week in *Ma'ariv*. The story suggested that Shamir had been advised, in a secret report prepared by the country's military intelligence service, to open discussions with the PLO as a means of dealing with the intifada. (Shamir subsequently denied the existence of any such report.)

Maxwell, who made no effort to conceal his anger, replied that he would ask the editor not to publish "such rubbish." In a later interview, Dissentshik said that Maxwell had apologized to him for his remark and went on to say that, as the editor, he enjoyed complete editorial independence. Dissentshik emphasized, however, that he intended to uphold *Ma'ariv*'s reputation as a "responsible" newspaper and argued that there is sometimes a need to refrain from publishing information that could harm national security.

Maxwell's "rubbish" remark sent shock waves through *The Jerusalem Post* and prompted editor Ari Rath to express his opposition to Maxwell's purchase of the paper. Maxwell, he argued, would interfere with news decisions.

Maxwell was not deterred. According to reports in the Israeli press, he, together with Canadian businessman Charles Bronfman, submitted a proposal that included an expression of interest in purchasing the *Post*'s offered stocks for between \$4 million and \$6.5 million, as well as an ambitious plan to turn the *Post* into an international paper of the Jewish people. The proposal included a plan to print and market the daily paper in Jerusalem, New York City, Los Angeles, London, and Tokyo, and to merge its news operations with other Maxwell-

owned news services, including possibly *Ma'ariv*.

In an interview published in *Ha'aretz* this past June, Maxwell said that, if his bid was accepted, he would replace the *Post*'s editors and some of its reporters and assure that the paper would support Israeli government policies, regardless of which party was in power. Maxwell added that his partnership with the politically liberal Bronfman would guarantee editorial balance.

Meanwhile, Genger and his investor group were raising the ante. They proposed to buy the stocks for more than \$8 million. (Among the members of this group, incidentally, was Yaacov Nimrodi, an Israeli arms dealer who played a major role as a middleman in the Iran-contra affair.) The third major actor in these intense international negotiations was the Canadian media company, Hollinger, and the initial bid made by Hollinger president David Radler topped all the other offers by a huge margin: it was, reportedly, more than \$20 million.

Maxwell, according to his own *Ma'ariv*, put pressure on Henry Kissinger and other prominent North American Jews on the board of directors of the Argus Corporation, a Toronto-based holding company of which Hollinger is a subsidiary, to convince Radler to lay off the deal. These efforts were unsuccessful. Eventually, according to reports, Radler agreed to pay nearly \$17.3 million for the *Post*.

For many Israeli observers, including many *Post* staff members, Radler is something of an enigma. Active in Canadian Conservative party politics, Radler — like his business partner, Hollinger's chief executive officer Conrad Black — has seemed to be less interested in foreign policy issues than in preaching the benefits of free-market economics. His decision to buy the *Post* had nothing to do with his Jewish background, he explained to an Israeli reporter: "I would have bought the *Chinese Morning Post* despite the fact that I am not Chinese." His position on Israeli-Arab issues could probably best be described as mainstream.



During the negotiations leading up to his purchase of the *Post*, Radler impressed his Israeli counterparts as a professional who, unlike Genger and Maxwell, would refrain from meddling in the editorial process and in personnel decisions. Both during the negotiations and later, in interviews, he laid emphasis on his plans to translate the *Post's* international prestige into commercial success, arguing that the paper has the potential for increased circulation and revenues both in Israel and abroad.

It is not clear on what basis this optimism is founded. To many observers, the notion that the *Post* can boost its circulation at home seems unrealistic, and many believe that increasing the paper's circulation abroad would be an extremely expensive venture that, in all likelihood, would fail. The *Post's* economic problems were highlighted this past August by the decision of the paper's newly appointed manager, Yehudah Levi, to fire 30 percent of the editorial staff (twenty-two reporters and editors) and thirty-seven other employees. The news staff, outraged, threatened to call a strike, which, if differences cannot be settled through negotiation, would be the first strike in the paper's history.

Such concerns aside, two things are indisputable: the *Post* has received an infusion of capital that will enable it to expand and improve its news operations, and the paper has been spared the ignominious fate of being acquired by the allies of General Sharon.

Sharon's allies are now said to be pinning their hopes on another foreign publisher — Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch, who is not Jewish, is a staunch supporter of Israel, as well as a friend of Sharon, whose media adviser, Uri Dan, was hired on as Middle East correspondent for the *New York Post* when Murdoch owned it and remains in the position. So far, however, Murdoch has shown little inclination to buy into the Israeli media market in any significant way. His sole involvement to date has been his investment in a small free Tel Aviv weekly, *La'inyan*, which specializes in local gossip and entertainment. Its editor, David Bar Ilan, has contributed articles to *Commentary* and *The New York Times* in which he criticizes the U.S. press for its alleged pro-Arab bias.

The perception that the country's press is being taken over by foreign invaders has created a backlash in Israel. A phrase often heard these days, especially in conversations with leftists, is "cultural imperialism." Yossi Sarid, a leftist member of the Knesset, recently proposed legislation that would forbid the sale of Israeli media properties to foreign companies. His proposal, which found little support in the Knesset, reflects a certain "nativist" attitude to be found among liberals and conservatives alike. It might be summed up as follows: outsiders shouldn't be telling us Israelis, who risk our lives defending our country, how to think and what to do.

Leftists like Sarid are concerned that, with the shift to the right in Israeli politics, the acquisition of the country's major papers by powerful foreign businessmen who side with the Likud will help to silence the few remaining voices of opposition to the government's policies in the occupied territories.

While concurring with the argument that people like Maxwell and Genger will probably use their presence in the Israeli media to advance their political agendas, Dan Margalit, a respected Israeli columnist for *Ha'aretz*, has argued

that it would be hypocritical on the part of the Israelis to ask for financial and political support from Jews abroad and, at the same time, prevent foreigners from investing in the Israeli media. And he raises a good question: If Israeli publishers have a right to tilt their publications in a certain political direction, should not foreign publishers have the same right?

Margalit's final point is perhaps the most persuasive: if Genger or Maxwell turn their publications into the mouthpiece of a political party or figure, they will lose readers and have a hard time attracting good reporters.

Uri Avneri, for his part, argues that, in the long run, the commercialization of the Israeli press, including foreign investment, will foster political independence and editorial diversification. This is of crucial importance in a country whose most powerful medium, television, is controlled by the government. In the meantime, foreign capital, much as it may be resented by some, has assured the survival of *Ha'olam Haze* and *Ma'ariv* and given a new lease on life to *The Jerusalem Post*. And in a small country with only a handful of newspapers, the survival of even a single voice is significant. ♦



The Jerusalem Post

**CANADIAN ENIGMA:** David Radler, head of a Canadian newspaper chain, paid more than \$17 million for The Jerusalem Post — more than three times the amount offered by the Genger group. To many, Radler's stated aim of boosting circulation in Israel and abroad seems unrealistic.

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# A 1908 law pits railroad employer against worker in a costly game of chance. A change in the rules is overdue.

For most American workers, a job-related injury means workers' compensation—"no-fault" recovery, guaranteed benefits and rehabilitation.

But not for injured railroad workers.

They come under a 1908 law, the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA). FELA guarantees nothing. An employee with a slick lawyer might win big. Or an employee might get nothing—despite a crippling disability.

FELA works that way because it was enacted before state workers' compensation systems were put into place.

For instance, FELA doesn't provide for rehabilitation. In fact, rehabilitation is discouraged because it could hurt an employee's chances with a jury. Modern compensation systems stress helping the injured worker to become productive again.

And don't let anybody tell you that big awards under

FELA promote safety. The reverse is true. Winning or losing depends upon who is found to be at fault—FELA rewards the placing of blame, not the improvement of safety.

FELA is expensive, too. Between 1981 and 1988, employee injuries dropped by almost half—but FELA costs doubled. The tab now tops a billion dollars a year, taking more than 3 cents out of every gross revenue dollar paid by railroad shippers and consumers. FELA amounts to a hidden tax on rail shipments.

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## Who likes FELA?

A small group of specialized lawyers like FELA—a lot. When you collect between 25 and 40 percent of a big settlement, you can afford a few losses. In 1988, alone, FELA was worth an estimated \$170 million in fees.

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## FELA should be repealed.

In 1908, FELA was a good idea. But the past 80 years have seen better ideas come along, namely, no-fault workers' compensation. Today, this legal dinosaur is unfair to injury victims, inhibits rail safety efforts, and siphons off dollars that could be used to improve safety and service. A change is long overdue. For more information, write: FELA, Dept. CJR-B, Association of American Railroads, 50 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.



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RAILROADS

# ON THE JOB

## ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO BE A FELLOW?

BY STEPHEN J. SIMURDA

Last year, roughly 1,000 U.S. journalists applied for one or another of the top ten midcareer fellowship programs available to them. Of these, only about 100 were chosen. (Getting into medical school can be less competitive.) For them, if the experiences of former fellows hold true, this fall will be the beginning of the best year of their working lives.

They will spend an academic year at a major university, taking classes and attending lectures. A stipend should cover most living expenses. There will be one or two weekly seminars with other fellows at which a couple of glasses of sherry may stimulate the discussion. During the year, the fellows may be visited by some of the nation's top editors and other dignitaries passing through town. As one former Nieman fellow put it, "Fellows are treated like royalty."

More to the point, there is every likelihood that the experience will enhance the fellow's career. Take the case of Valerie Hyman. Hyman was a reporter at WSMV-TV, an NBC affiliate in Nashville, when she received a Nieman fellowship in 1986. Her employer, the Gillett Group of Nashville, was suppor-

tive and when her nine months were over she was made director of news development for what was then a chain of twelve television stations in Detroit, San Diego, Baltimore, and Tampa, among other cities.

"I was able to make a rather major change in direction and still work for the same company," Hyman says. She recently left the Gillett Group to become founding director of the Program for Broadcast Journalists at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg.

Then there's the case of Dick Thompson, who was working in the San Francisco bureau of *Time* magazine when he received a science-writing fellowship at MIT in 1985. He hoped that after completing the fellowship he could return to *Time* as a science correspondent, a position the magazine did not have. And he wanted to work in Washington D.C.

Thompson was persistent, and his persistence paid off. "The day after the program ended, I was in Washington" working as a science correspondent, he recalls. "It was one of the best things I've done and one of the best investments *Time* made."

Finally, consider what happened to Mike Meyers. When Meyers applied for a Nieman fellowship in 1985, he had been with the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* for only seventeen months. The paper waived a rule that an employee needed at least five years on the job to go on a fellowship. While he was away, Meyers deepened his knowledge of economics, but wasn't quite sure what he would do when he returned to his paper. Then he learned that the *Star Tribune* had a long-term plan to open an office in New York City. Management invited Meyers to apply for the job, and he got it. Today he writes national business and economics stories as a one-person New York bureau. "They really sat down with me and said, 'How can we exploit this?'" Meyers says of his editors.

But many fellows have what those in the business call reentry problems upon leaving academe and returning to the newsroom. Take the case of Karen Klinger. Klinger had been the science writer for the *San Jose Mercury News* for most of the period between 1978 and 1985, the year she received a science-writing fellowship at MIT. While she was away, the paper did not pay the difference be-

tween her salary and the fellowship stipend, as many news organizations do. When she returned, Klinger says, she expected a job comparable to the one she had left; instead, she was assigned to cover police in the paper's Fremont bureau. Klinger considered it "an entry-level job" and filed a union grievance. The case eventually went to arbitration and Klinger won, being returned to a general assignment position in the city room. She left shortly afterwards and now free-lances in Boston.

The stories of three journalists from the Providence, Rhode Island, *Journal-Bulletin* illustrate post-fellowship experiences ranging from rocky to rough.

Doug Cumming finished a Nieman fellowship in the spring of 1987 and returned to his old job as special writer, which he described as a "jump-and-run beat" that he had generally enjoyed. But upon his return, Cumming was eager to work creatively with his editors on new projects. "When I found myself covering the kickoff of the United Way campaign," he says, "I knew something had to happen." Fortunately, the editor's job at the paper's Sunday magazine opened up about that time and Cumming stepped in. If that job had not come along, he says, "I would have found other work."

Cumming, who has since left the

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paper, fared much better than Peter Gosselin, who was the paper's labor reporter in 1983 when he received what was then called a Bagehot (now Knight-Bagehot) fellowship at Columbia University. To the surprise of some, *Journal-Bulletin* management decided to pay full salary and benefits to Gosselin and another reporter going on a Nieman fellowship the same year. In return the paper wanted Gosselin's assurance that he would return after his fellowship.

Toward the end of the program, how-

*Stephen J. Simurda, a free-lance writer who lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, is a frequent contributor to CJR.*

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ever, Gosselin began thinking about staying at Columbia long enough to finish an MBA. Unlike other fellowships, the Bagehot offers credits and the possibility of completing an MBA by staying at the university for about six more months. Gosselin broached the subject with his editors, who, he says, encouraged him to stay but who also made it clear that he could not be kept on the payroll. Gosselin knew this meant he would have to be hired all over again when his studies were over, but his editors had assured him that he would be welcomed back and, indeed, took his return for granted, even discussing possible new beats with him.

When Gosselin returned to Providence, however, he was not hired. Charles N. Mock, executive vice-president for personnel at the *Journal-Bulletin*, says the reason for this was that Gosselin had gone back on his word to return after the fellowship, adding, "Once somebody has made a moral commitment and he reneges on it, I don't look too favorably on him."

Gosselin, who now works for *The Boston Globe*, says he suspects he also got caught in a struggle between management and The Newspaper Guild.

Mock concedes that the issue of leaves of absence for fellowships had become a thorny one in union negotiations and that after the Gosselin experience the paper clamped down on any support for journalists during their fellowships, although Mock says he has since decided

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**'A person going on  
leave can have  
a ripple effect  
on fifteen people'**  
◆

to evaluate all salary-paid leaves of absence on a case-by-case basis.

Cumming was given his salary while at Harvard because the paper's executive editor had made a verbal commitment to pay him. Elliot G. Jaspin was not as lucky when he received a Gannett Center fellowship last year. The *Journal-Bulletin* refused even to pay for continuation of his health benefits. Jaspin, a Pulitzer Prize-winner who is one of the nation's leading experts on computer-assisted re-

## THE TOP TEN

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### Knight-Bagehot Fellowship in Economics and Business Journalism

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### Knight Science Journalism Fellowships

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### Michigan Journalism Fellows

Eight months. University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Twelve slots, eight for generalists, four for specialists in the following disciplines: business and economics, investigative reporting, medicine and health sciences, and technology. Twelve slots; 96 applications for 1989-90. \$22,000 stipend.

### The Nieman Fellowships for Journalists

Nine months. Harvard University. Twelve slots; 96 applications for 1989-90. \$22,000 stipend.

### University of Southern California Center for International Journalism Fellowships

Eleven months. USC and El Colegio de Mexico, in Mexico City. Twelve to 15 slots; 100 applications for 1989-90. Stipend of about \$35,000.

### William Benton Fellowships in Broadcast Journalism

Nine months. University of Chicago. Twelve slots; 75 applications for 1989-90. Stipend equal to current salary.

### Yale Law School Fellowships in Law for Journalists

Nine months. Yale University. Five slots; 68 applications for 1989-90. \$20,000 stipend.



porting, was incredulous. "I wanted to go back to the *Journal*," he says, "but because of this policy there was no way I was going back there." Jaspin is now at the University of Missouri, where he is creating a training center for computer-assisted reporting.

Mock clearly thinks that fellowships have not benefited his paper. Of the four fellows the *Journal-Bulletin* has had this decade, he notes, "We've lost every one of them."

While most programs ask fellows to return to their former news organizations when the year ends, program directors concede this doesn't always happen. Many journalists see the fellowship year as a chance to move on. "People do undoubtedly apply for fellowships because they want to change jobs and they want a year to do it," says Charles Eissendrath, director of the Michigan Journalism Fellows. "I don't encourage it, but it happens." A recent study of former Nieman fellows done by Jerome Aumante of Rutgers University showed that a quarter of them either did not return to their former employer or spent less than a year there after the fellowship.

Many employers think the risk is worth taking. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for example, has won a reputation as a staunch supporter of fellowship programs, largely because of Eugene L. Roberts, executive editor and a former Nieman fellow. The *Inquirer* has produced at least thirty mid-career fellows during Roberts's tenure, almost all of whom remain at the paper.

"There's a school of thought in the newspaper business that if you start work on the police beat and move up, you learn everything you need to know," says Roberts. He believes that fellowships provide talented journalists with the opportunity to stretch that learning curve: "To pretend that reporting is simply an information-gathering process and you don't really need to dip into the subject matter is shortsighted."

While few would dispute Roberts, some journalists continue to have a tough time convincing their editors that leaving the newsroom for a year is such a great idea. Victoria M. Fung was a senior producer for KCTS-TV, Seattle's public television station, when she received a Gannett Center fellowship in 1987 to study the status of women in

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The application deadline for the 1990-91 program is February 1, 1990.

For more information, write:

Peter M. Herford, Director, William Benton Fellowships, The University of Chicago, 5737 University Ave., Chicago, IL 60637.

**William Benton Fellowships in Broadcast Journalism  
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Pending budget approval, the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, is seeking two full-time faculty members. The first opening is for a person with a distinguished record of reporting on public affairs in print media. The second position is for a television journalist who has substantial experience as a producer or reporter.

The quality of the applicant's professional work will be given more weight than advanced degrees. Previous teaching experience will be considered an asset. The appointee is expected to remain active in the profession, either as a journalist or as a scholarly researcher.

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television news. From the beginning there were problems. "They didn't share any sense of excitement about the fellowship," Fung says of her superiors.

Tom Howe, senior vice-president and station manager at KCTS, says he felt it would be "difficult for us to continue doing what we were doing without her," especially since Fung was also co-anchor of the station's nightly newscast. He told Fung it was not the right time in her career to accept a fellowship. Eventually, the conflict boiled down to whether Fung would return after the fellowship and in what capacity.

The station's managers wanted Fung back but wouldn't guarantee that she would return to her anchor's seat. "They couldn't tell me what I would do," Fung says. Howe argues that he couldn't promise Fung the same job because that would mean he would have to hire someone and then "yank that person when Fung came back."

Fung did not return to the station and she has not found another job in television news.

Bob Ingle, executive editor of the *San Jose Mercury News*, points out that it's not easy for a news organization to let a talented journalist go for nearly a year. "A person going on a leave can have a ripple effect on twelve to fifteen people," he says. And filling the job of a valuable beat reporter can cause practical difficulties. Under the terms of his contract with The Newspaper Guild, Ingle says, the longest he can employ a temporary worker is six months. Most fellowships last nine months. "How do you fill that job?" he asks.

He is chary in his support of fellowships. "Some fellowships have far higher standards than others," he says. As a result, his paper automatically grants leaves and salary supplements only for the Nieman program at Harvard and the Knight program at nearby Stanford University. Others are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, although Ingle says that he has never stopped someone from going. "It's not a question of whether they go; it's a question of money."

It's not a question of money at The

## TIPS FOR WINNERS

Few journalists will be surprised to learn that the most frequently mentioned cause of reentry problems — the problems experienced on returning to the newsroom after leading the life of a fellow — was a failure to communicate effectively. The interviews conducted for this article yielded several suggestions for making the most out of a fellowship year.

- Before leaving on a fellowship, sit down with one or more supervisors and discuss what you hope to do while away and how it may affect your work.
- When you arrive for your fellowship, bear in mind that it may take several weeks before you adjust to a world without deadlines and daily responsibilities. As you will be told many times, immerse yourself and have fun.
- While away, stay in loose touch with your news organization. A phone call every couple of months is probably sufficient. If you run across an interesting story idea, it might be a good idea to touch base while passing it along.
- Toward the end of the fellowship, if you haven't already done so, start talking to your editors more specifically

about what you want to do when you return to work. If you left as a business writer but have decided that your true calling is as a religion writer, tell someone other than your spouse.

- When you return, have a long meeting with your editors. Tell them what you got out of your experience and how this can be of value to them.
- Even with all the enthusiasm and good intentions in the world, many news organizations remain resistant to change. If you want a position that doesn't currently exist or that involves a certain amount of bureaucratic gymnastics, be patiently persistent.
- Don't behave like a prima donna. Colleagues tend to regard returning fellows as having their heads in the clouds. Some editors, who have been slogging through the mud of day-to-day news while you were away, have been known to send returning fellows out on mundane and routine assignments to make sure they haven't lost their skills (or possibly just to haze them). Accepting such things with grace and good humor can go a long way to help ease the transition.

Associated Press. D. Byron Yake, director of human resources for the AP, says that since the wire service's scattered bureau network includes many small offices which would find it difficult to get along without a key reporter, the service treats fellowships as it does any request for a leave of absence. This means that the employee must have been with the AP for ten years and will receive no pay or benefits while away.

Some news organizations simply question the value of fellowship programs. Warren Hoge, assistant managing editor at *The New York Times*, thinks that the *Times* can match the benefits of any fellowship. "The opportunities here to broaden and enrich your knowledge come with the assignment," Hoge says.

Most news organizations are supportive of fellowships, however, and most journalists do return to their former employers. Admittedly, when they return they may require a little more attention than reporters and editors who have continued churning out the news every day. Victor K. McElheny, director of the MIT program, says that editors must bear in mind that "we're giving you back someone who is more challenging, but we're also giving you someone who is of more use to you."

James V. Risser, director of the Stanford program, says that there are still "an awful lot of news organizations that don't know what to do with a person going on a fellowship and don't put a lot of thought into what to do when that person gets back. I think that's just bad management."

Good management, Risser and others agree, would mean newsroom managers thinking about and talking to fellows, especially as the time approaches for them to return. Generally, what's called for is a new challenge.

David Lawrence, publisher of the *Detroit Free Press*, has no doubt that any possible difficulties fellowships may entail for news organizations are outweighed by their benefits. In fact, Lawrence and Gene Roberts personally helped raise money to keep the Michigan program afloat a few years ago. Why? Lawrence explains: "I regard these mid-career fellowships as one of the best contributions we can make to a reporter's or editor's future, and to the future of our whole business." ♦

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# PAUL MILLER

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## WASHINGTON REPORTING FELLOWSHIPS

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### Applications being accepted.

The Paul Miller Washington Reporting Fellowships program is designed to help Washington-based print and broadcast bureau chiefs and staffers do a better job of developing locally oriented news stories in the nation's capital.

Beginning in Spring 1990, 15 fellows will spend two days a month for 12 months meeting with experienced Washington journalists, visiting the places where local news originates, learning how to obtain information, and getting to know prominent newsmakers and behind-the-scenes news sources.

**Eligibility** The fellowships are designed primarily for journalists currently or about to be assigned to Washington by any regional or national newspaper, wire service, or radio or television station maintaining a bureau in Washington. Applicants' employers must endorse applications and affirm recipients will be permitted to attend all sessions.

**Selection** Fellowships will be awarded based on applicants' potential to provide superior coverage of locally oriented news in Washington for readers and audiences across the country.

**Schedule** Applications are due January 15, 1990 and recipients will be announced in February 1990. Classes start in April 1990.

**Location** Many of the sessions will be held at the National Press Club in the National Press Building at 14th and F Streets, N.W. Others will take place on Capitol Hill.

**Faculty** The associates who will teach the sessions include experienced Washington reporters, analysts, public-affairs specialists, lobbyists, and other Washington-based experts.

**Fees** The fellowships are tuition-free. Meals, and when applicable, transportation and lodging will be provided.

**Affiliation** The fellowships are an operating program of the Gannett Foundation of Washington, D.C., in cooperation with the National Press Foundation, and using the facilities of the National Press Club.

Additional information and application forms are available from:

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# BOOKS

## HOW TO BE LIKE ME

BY JANE AMSTERDAM

In this, the decade of the Humble Tycoon Writer, publishers have been mass marketing a mutant strain of autobiographical works. Now comes a book that will have you begging for a second read of Donald Trump: Al Neuharth's accurately titled *Confessions of an S.O.B.*

This is no ordinary s.o.b. This is the founder of *USA Today*, the high priest of the Journalism of Hope, the master of all he clichés. As he repeatedly points out, Neuharth began life as a kid from "the wrong side of the tracks" who never met a man (or woman) he didn't

**CONFESSIONS OF AN S.O.B.**  
BY AL NEUHARTH  
DOUBLEDAY. 372 PP. \$18.95

like to beat. He had a financial "monkey on my back," but then discovered that "Chicken Little was wrong"; you could "pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start over." It meant putting together business plans "by guess and by golly"; it meant learning that "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em," and that you should never, ever worry about problems. "That doesn't mean wearing rose-colored glasses," he writes. "It means looking clearly at the pros and cons. Trying to turn every weakness into a strength, building beautiful mountains out of bothersome little molehills."

In his nineteen years as president and/or chairman of Gannett, it became the largest newspaper company in the country. Neuharth acquired sixty-nine daily papers, sixteen TV stations, twenty-nine

Jane Amsterdam, former editor of the New York Post and Manhattan, inc., specializes in working for Borderline S.O.B.s.

radio stations, the nation's largest billboard company, and, of course, launched *USA Today*. He added women and minorities to the board, setting an outstanding example of an equal opportunity employer: of Gannett's 37,000 employees, 40 percent are women, 21 percent are nonwhite; 22 percent of its publishers are women. (His enlightenment is not absolute, however. One of the subchapters of his book is entitled, "Tits Above the Fold.")

No book by *USA Today*'s flamboyant founder would be complete, of course, without lists of some kind. Neuharth gives us the "Top Ten Governors," the "Presidential Possibilities," those "In Over Their Heads," the "Top Ten Heads of State" (and those world leaders he finds to be "In Over Their Heads," as well as "Two Fascinating S.O.B.s" — Fidel Castro and Pieter Willem Botha); a report card on the media (top ten and most-overrated newspapers and journalism schools), and, for some reason, the top ten and five most overrated hotels in the world.

Neuharth not only drops names, he drop-kicks them. Some examples:

- Tom Wyman, former president of CBS: "A flustered misfit."
- Katharine Graham: "Believed what she read in her own newspaper — always a risk at the *Post*."
- Alvah Chapman, Jr., of Knight-Ridder: "Delay and pray is his style; if in doubt, he won't reach for a deal."
- Van Gordon Sauter, former president of CBS News: "Not impressed."
- Dan Rather: "The Ben Bradlee of Broadcasting."

He means this to be insulting. Neuharth expends a lot of bile on his nemesis at *The Washington Post* (who happens to be my old boss and a friend). He seems to be obsessed with Bradlee, perhaps because he is a powerful practitioner of what Neuharth derides as "The Journalism of Despair." He fingers Bradlee as none other than Deep Throat. Why? "Easy," Neuharth writes. "Bradlee has hundreds of political and social contacts in Washington. Many of them comfortably pass tips to Bradlee at cocktail parties or in phone calls."

There are many kinds of s.o.b.s to be found in Neuharth's lexicon. He himself, of course, is your "lovable" and

"playful" variety. There are Bad S.O.B.s (such as Jimmy Hoffa), Conservative Up-Tight S.O.B.s (every "bean-counter" he ever met), Greedy S.O.B.s (raider Carl Lindner, whom he also describes as a "shark in sheep's clothing,"), and, my personal favorite, Borderline S.O.B.s, notably General George Patton.

Neuharth met Patton while he was serving overseas during the war. Neuharth claims that Patton threatened to put him behind barbed wire with the German prisoners he was escorting because he had allowed them to stop and rest. To this day, Patton seems to be his only real hero. He has seen the movie *Patton* eleven times (putting him slightly behind two world-class s.o.b.s — George Steinbrenner, who has seen it fifteen times, and Richard Nixon, who is said to have watched George C. Scott's inspirational performance before ordering the invasion of Cambodia).

To be fair to Patton, he is not entirely responsible for the character who emerges here. Neuharth was born this way. At six, he threw a tantrum to keep his widowed mother from remarrying. "I don't think she ever dated again," he writes. "I've often wondered whether I did the right thing for Mother. I know

**"Neuharth's style is to ingratiate, intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, and pontificate"**



it turned out to be the best thing for me." He appears to have the emotional sensitivity of a smelt, having ignored his children and dumped two wives. He tells us all turned out well in the end. His grown children are his "best friends" and he gives each of his ex-wives a chance to land one on his chin. The chapter by "Wife No. 2, 1973-82" is almost worth the \$18.95. It begins: "Al Neuharth is a snake. He's cold-blooded. He's sneaky and slithers around and sheds his old skin . . . Give Al this: he doesn't hate. That would require too much emotion and wasted effort."

Like most of the books in the Big Bad Bestselling Boys of the Boardroom genre, this one would be better categorized in the "how not to" section. Neuharth's style is to ingratiate, intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, and pontificate. Three years after the launch of *USA Today*, for example, he hauled his top executives out of their weekend beds, gave them a few hours to fly down to his Florida home, and recreated "The Last Supper" to prove his point: it was time to cut costs and make some money or they would be "passed over." Wearing a crown of thorns and a flowing robe, Neuharth gave them Manischewitz wine and a lot of hell. "To make sure none of

them forgot the message," he boasts, "I had a photographer on hand to record for posterity this somber setting. I later gave them autographed copies."

The glee with which he crushes rivals is equally chilling. "I enjoy a good fight as much as anyone," he writes, "especially when the stakes are my boss's job as c.e.o."

One particularly odious episode involved exactly that, unseating his mentor at Gannett, Paul Miller. Miller, who had hand-picked Neuharth, was all that stood between Neuharth and the ruby slippers. Neuharth lobbied the board to dump his old pal and ultimately took control of the company. He did let Miller stay on as a lame-duck chairman for a few years before finishing him off for good. And he does have a few regrets about the way he handled it: "I've often blamed myself for not having forced him into retirement at a time when he could enjoy it. To him, it seemed as though I was simply an ungrateful young upstart, interested only in his job. On reflection, I should have bested this boss sooner."

And, for those wanna-be S.O.B.s hanging on his every anecdote for helpful hints, he cautions: "Try it only if you're sure to win."

Even Neuharth didn't win them all. He failed big before he was thirty, something he thinks everyone should do — though he gives the rest of us peons ten extra years in which to do it before panicking. He and a friend started an ill-fated peach-colored sports tabloid in South Dakota called *SoDak Sports*. (Perhaps it should have been Gatorade green.) It folded after twenty-two months. In the most interesting chapter of the book, he blames his big ego for blowing his plans to merge with CBS. Ironically, he is shocked that c.e.o. Wyman had so little respect for his semi-retired boss, William Paley.

Neuharth wasn't about to let that happen to him. After knocking off Miller at age forty-nine, one of his first acts as c.e.o. was to spell out in contractual form the exact date of his own retirement: "No later than March 31, 1989." And so, on April Fool's Day, it was goodbye corporate jet, hello \$5,130,000 parachute. He had managed to bump himself off in style. His fans can sleep easy. This is one high-rolling stone who will gather no moss. ♦

# STAR-SPANGLED BIGOT

BY FREDERICK ALLEN

When Cyrus Curtis bought *The Saturday Evening Post* for \$1,000 in 1897, it was a failing sentimental-fiction and poetry magazine with a circulation of 2,000 and an average size of sixteen pages. A year later, in a stroke more of luck than of genius, Curtis took on a thirty-one-year-old cub newspaper reporter named George Lorimer. Within a year, George Lorimer worked his way up to editor and began building one of the great magazines of America, virtually from scratch. This job of constructing a magazine and its potent identity is the subject of *Creating America*.

Lorimer set about shaping the *Post* as a national magazine for the "average

**CREATING AMERICA:  
GEORGE HORACE LORIMER AND THE  
SATURDAY EVENING POST**  
BY JAN COHN. UNIVERSITY OF  
PITTSBURGH PRESS. 326 PP. \$24.95

American," whom he took to be a young self-made businessman whose fundamental values included thrift, honesty, self-reliance, and good hard work. Within a couple of years his writers included Joel Chandler Harris, Hamlin Garland, Bret Harte, and ex-President Grover Cleveland. Lorimer filled the pages with upbeat, practical articles like "How I Made My First \$1,000" and "Why Young Men Fail," with pieces by "experts" on national finance and politics, and with fiction that portrayed men striving and succeeding by honest endeavor, common sense, and pluck. By 1903 the *Post* was fat with advertising and selling more than a half a million copies a week.

By World War I, the magazine had firmly established itself among millions of readers. Its trademark sentimental cover art typically featured beautiful women or charming children and old

*Frederick Allen is a senior editor at American Heritage magazine.*



folks. Inside appeared the work of many of the nation's best writers, whom Lorimer rewarded very richly for their loyalty. But Lorimer's optimistic young America — the *Post's* America — was, in his view, being sullied by immigrants, unionists, and radicals. His war correspondents painted a picture of a war that was as profoundly foreign as it was horrific, and when the United States joined the conflict, it became a struggle to protect the nation from European barbarism. Articles and editorials appeared condemning all “hyphenated Americans” and seeking an end to all immigration. By 1918, with Bolshevism on the march, an increasingly shrill Lorimer editorialized that in America “agents were everywhere among the ignorant, the sapheaded, and the vicious . . . . So in planning our list of imports let us include only desirables . . . . America for Americans and men who want to be Americans.”

Lorimer became a rigid defender of the evanescent, ideal nineteenth-century America he had conceived. In a 1920 editorial he bemoaned “our socialistic system of confiscatory taxation . . . our

policy of regarding destructive alien reds as wronged innocents, and constructive American businessmen as suspicious characters.” His magazine lamented a Gary, Indiana, steel strike, observing with regret that “Mr. Thomas Jefferson handed out a nice juicy mental peach to the world when he suggested that all men were free and equal.” And he continued, awkwardly, to espouse old-fashioned frugality and stern patience while everything about the age — including all the advertising in the *Post* — counseled the opposite. In one 1922 issue, a pair of cautionary tales about disastrous easy credit and foolhardy investing ran across the gutter from an ad for porcelain whose text began “It’s just *melting* our bank roll, you know. But ever since we came back from abroad I have been *revelling* in buying things.”

Struggling to accommodate society’s multiplying complexities, Lorimer and the *Post* descended to first-person fiction passed off as fact. The result could be ludicrous. To confute radicals and unionists in 1924 he published “Life Among the Laborers,” by an anonymous author who explained, “I have remained a laborer, not because opportunities for a richer life have been denied me or because I have no faith in the American hustle-and-strive doctrine, but because of my own limitations and because manual labor is agreeable to me and offers a good living. I also admit being a fellow of low taste who wholeheartedly enjoys the companionship of workingmen and girls.” Another answer to radicalism was, for a while, fascism. In 1928 Lorimer published in eight installments a ghost-written and pasted-together autobiography of Benito Mussolini. And he ran a series of articles on race in Europe that asserted that “the racial factor lies behind most of the world’s problems” and that the superior “Nordic Type had diminished racially in Europe” but was still happily in the majority in America.


“The Great Depression,” writes Jan Cohn, a dean and English professor at Trinity College, “found *The Saturday Evening Post* in fighting trim . . . . The bloated book of the twenties was considerably slimmed down and, like a reconditioned fighter, gained new vitality. That energy was harnessed to meet the most powerful challenge Lorimer had

yet faced.” The challenge was Franklin Roosevelt. Lorimer embarked on a crusade. He wrote in a 1933 editorial that “no thoughtful man can escape the conclusion that many of the brain trust’s ideas and plans are based on Russian ideology . . . and that fundamental American ideas are in danger of being scrapped.” He ran confessional articles by New Deal defectors and avoided pieces that played up unemployment. He published an article by Martin Dies explaining that without the influx of “foreign stock . . . the unemployment

## ◆ **“Lorimer was a brilliant editor who created a monster”** ◆

problem would never have achieved such serious and unprecedented proportions,” and a diatribe by Gilbert Seldes maintaining that “the American intellectual has sabotaged his country.” And he turned all his guns against the 1936 reelection of Roosevelt, which, he warned, would “undermine the foundations, dissipate the substance, and destroy the real spirit of the American system of representative government.”

The campaign was Lorimer’s last. Before election day he knew he was dying of cancer. He retired on the last day of 1936 and was dead the next October. Thirty-seven years earlier, as Cohn writes in her introduction, he had “set out to create America in and through the pages of *The Saturday Evening Post* . . . codifying the ground rules that explained and defined Americanism.” All along, “the creation and dissemination of a transcendent American consciousness was the overriding mission of the *Post*.” That is the thesis of this book. It sounds at first like a wild exaggeration, an author’s grasping for grander importance than her subject holds. But this thoughtful, balanced, elegantly written study of the *Post* under Lorimer shows it all to be true. Lorimer was a brilliant editor who created a monster: a magazine that embodied a powerful vision of America, heartfelt, enormously appealing, vastly successful, and unreal. ◆



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# SIGNAL ACHIEVEMENT

BY JAMES BOYLAN

The new *International Encyclopedia of Communications* is a marvel of order and planning. Under the editorship of Erik Barnouw, historian of broadcasting and documentary film, and the sponsorship of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, the work marched from the gestation stage in 1982 to publication on schedule in the spring of 1989. Twenty-five section editors, with the aid of 170 editorial advisers, obtained articles from some 450 contributors from twenty-nine countries. The whole has been handsomely printed in two colors and four volumes, thoroughly indexed and cross-indexed, and presented in clear and ser-

*James Boylan is a professor of journalism at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.*

viceable English with generous illustrations.

The encyclopedia takes as its province, Barnouw writes in the preface, "all ways in which information, ideas, and attitudes pass among individuals, groups, nations, and generations" (and, he might have added, animals as well; see articles on "Animal Communications," "Animal Signals," and "Animal Song"). This is an ambitious prospect, without discernible boundaries.

There emanates from this work the aggressive demeanor of a young disci-

## INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMMUNICATIONS

EDITED BY ERIK BARNOW.  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 4 VOLUMES.  
1,911 PP. \$350

pline — the first American doctoral program in communications dates only from 1945 — expanding its turf. It reaches out to absorb ungarded territory in older fields, taking healthy bites from the study of literature, linguistics, political science, and the arts. It claims dead patriarchs as its own, seizing the mantles

of, among others, Plato, Martin Luther, Milton, Locke, and Darwin. At the same time it sets about to create its own canon, raising to eminence such figures as Claude Shannon, an American mathematician, who, by my inspection, is the subject of the longest biographical article in the whole encyclopedia. (Shannon is credited with supplying the not unimportant link between human logic and computers.) It also recognizes such insiders as Paul F. Lazarsfeld of Columbia, Harold D. Lasswell of Chicago and Yale, and Wilbur Schramm of Iowa, Illinois, and Stanford. Schramm, in fact, contributed eleven articles before his death at the end of 1987.

This expansiveness makes the encyclopedia unexpectedly rewarding reading. There are articles by indubitable authorities from heterogeneous fields — Terry Eagleton of Oxford on structuralism, Elizabeth S. Eisenstein of Michigan on the cultural impact of printing, Ben H. Bagdikian of Berkeley on monopoly, the late Raymond Williams of Cambridge on "Fact and Fiction."

The browser finds many bonanzas — an array of articles one might never have

Vol. 166 No. 41 ★ ★ ★ Thursday

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expected to see in any encyclopedia. There is Alan Lomax on cantometrics, a system he invented to interpret singing styles cross-culturally; the journalist Robert Goralski on espionage; the conductor Jane Hulting on Muzak; Galit Hasan-rokem of Hebrew University in Jerusalem on the proverb; Roger D. Abrahams of Pennsylvania on insults.

Those seeking information on journalism may be less pleased. There is no comprehensive article on journalism, journalists, reporting, or news. The reader must look for subdivisions — television news, photojournalism, the newspaper — and hidden corners. For example, the best historical essay on journalism is found in Michael Schudson's article under "Political Communication." The best discussion of current press forms, including the alternative media, is Michael J. Robinson's, tucked away in "Government-Media Relations."

Worse, those chosen to represent American journalism in the biographical articles are for the most part the same old batch of imperial organizers — Bennett, Greeley, Hearst, Pulitzer, Luce — presented with stale bibliographies or no bibliography at all. I found only one article on a writing journalist, and the subject, Walter Lippmann, seemed to qualify only because he was also a public-opinion theorist. Not even Edward R. Murrow makes the list.

Somewhere in the back of their minds, the planners of the encyclopedia seemed to be dogged by the concept of journalism as a somewhat disreputable industry and journalists as mere vocationalists. This moldy view is not surprising, given the absence from the encyclopedia of almost all of the current generation of scholars who specialize in the study of journalism, journalists, and news.

But if journalists may feel slighted, what about women? To be sure, women are plentifully represented among the contributors. But among the 135 or so individuals chosen for separate biographical articles as the Great Communicators of all time — and meeting the qualification of being either dead or born before December 31, 1919 — only two are women — Helen Keller and Margaret Mead. As Janet Saltzman Chafetz writes in volume 4, page 56: "Definitional power reinforces sexism." ♦

# SHORT TAKES

## THE LIGHT IN LEBANON

What made reporting so difficult from Beirut was the fact that there was no center — not politically, not physically; since there was no functioning unified government, there was no authoritative body which reporters could use to check out news stories and no authoritative version of reality to either accept or refute; it was a city without "officials." After the civil war broke out in 1975, the center in Lebanon was carved up into a checkerboard of fiefdoms and private armies, each with its own version of reality, which it broadcast through its own radio station and its own spokesmen. The pure white light of Truth about any given news story in Lebanon was always refracted through this prism of factions and fiefdoms and then splashed on one's consciousness like a spectrum of light hitting a wall. As a reporter you had to learn to take a little ray of red from here and a little ray of blue from there and then paint in story form the picture that you thought most closely approximated reality. Rarely did you ever have the satisfaction of feeling that you really got to the bottom of something. It was like working in a dark cave with the aid of a single candle. Just when you thought you had spotted the white light of Truth, you would chase it, only to discover that it was someone else, also holding a candle, also looking for the light.

FROM **FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM**

BY THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN  
FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX. 525 PP. \$22.95



Jawad/SIPA Press





William  
Carlos  
Williams  
in 1958

## THE POET VERSUS THE TIMES

Who was the son-of-a-bitch who reviewed *New Directions* 1946 in *The New York Times Book Review*? I've forgot the name, Welsh or Mapes or something like that. What a bastard he was — left out [Henry] Miller and [Paul] Eluard completely. I wrote the "editor" the hottest letter I knew how to compose calling him and his weekly the cowardly bastards they are for operating in the first place without an editor — they appear to have none — and then admitting to their columns such an obviously vicious writer. They did not reply — there is no one to reply from such a source. I'm going to stop reading their dirty sheet. My only reason for reading it at any time has been that it gives the names of certain things published.

FROM **WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS  
AND JAMES LAUGHLIN:  
SELECTED LETTERS**  
EDITED BY HUGH WITEMEYER.  
NORTON. 293 PP. \$27.50

Thomas L. Friedman  
describes himself  
as "a young man  
from Minnesota  
who goes to Beirut  
and confronts a  
world for which  
nothing in his life  
had prepared him"



## HAMMER TO HOLLES TO PUNCH

Despite the Nixon administration's support of Occidental Petroleum's deal to sell fertilizer to the Soviet Union, *The New York Times* published a Sunday article by part-time West Coast correspondent Everett Holles questioning the validity of the contracts:

... Wall Street specialists and Occidental's competitors, many of whom regard Dr. Hammer as prone to careless optimism in publicizing Occidental's ventures, have been less than enthusiastic over his latest Russian deal. "He has a longstanding and well-documented habit of counting his chickens before they are hatched," said a West Coast oil executive . . . Others suggest that Dr. Hammer may have become involved, in this latest "historic agreement," in a Soviet propaganda play aimed at paving the way for the visit of L.I. Brezhnev, Soviet Communist Party chief, to Washington in June . . .

For somebody as conscious of his image as Hammer, the article in the world's most influential newspaper was a terrible blow. Hammer reportedly called Holles, then followed with a call to *New York Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. Holles was dispatched to Hammer's home for an interview. The next day, Holles's byline was on the front page, above his article about another Hammer-Soviet project. This time, the story was more complimentary. Accompanying it was a piece by the newspaper's Moscow correspondent emphasizing the importance of the Occidental-Soviet negotiations. It was an amazing recovery by Hammer, fully indicating the influence he could wield.

FROM **ARMAND HAMMER, THE UNTOLD STORY**  
BY STEVE WEINBERG. LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY. 501 PP. \$22.95



Armand  
Hammer  
(left) and  
Soviet  
Communist  
party chief  
Leonid  
Brezhnev,  
1973

## THE GREAT SHREDDER

The genius of the age is that of journalism. Journalism throngs every rift and cranny of our consciousness. It does so because the press and the media are far more than a technical instrument and commercial enterprise. The root-phenomenology of the journalistic is, in a sense, metaphysical. It articulates an epistemology and ethics of spurious temporality. Journalistic presentation generates a temporality of equivalent instantaneity. All things are more or less of equal import; all are only daily. Correspondingly, the content, the possible significance of the material which journalism communicates, is "remained" the day after. The journalistic vision sharpens to the point of maximum impact every event, every individual and social configuration; but the honing is uniform. Political enormity and the circus, the leaps of science and those of the athlete, apocalypse and indigestion, are given the same edge. Paradoxically, this monotone of graphic urgency anaesthetizes. The utmost beauty or terror are shredded at close of day. We are made whole again, and expectant, in time for the morning edition.

FROM **REAL PRESENCES**  
BY GEORGE STEINER. THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS. 236 PP. \$19.95

# LETTERS

## HUD, STILL A DUD

◆ Your story on the failure of the press to cover the Department of Housing and Urban Development until this year ("HUD, the Dud that Exploded," *CJR*, September/October) clearly revealed the attitudes that kept reporters away from the low-income housing and urban development beat. Unfortunately, the major media are still taking a short-sighted approach to HUD.

The major newspapers have jumped on the HUD bandwagon in search of a juicy scandal story or two. Meanwhile, they are totally ignoring the more fundamental issue of how to restructure national housing policy in the wake of the Reagan administration's cynical attempt to pillage HUD.

I have spoken to about ten reporters for major news organizations since the Section 8 story broke. As far as I can tell, none of them has been put on the HUD beat for the long term with an assignment to dig into the basic questions of housing and urban policy.

Even as a veteran of the housing beat, I had trouble doing the July 1988 story on the Section 8 scandal that was published in *Multi-Housing News* and was praised in your article. Except for my editor there, Moira Monahan, no one at Gralla Publications supported my work, which was facilitated by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Monahan and I have both left Gralla.

**ANDRE SHASHATY**

PRESIDENT  
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

## SCANLON!

◆ *CJR* is looking good and reading well, so please accept the following as an exception to my enjoyment of the magazine. I'm taking issue with Bruce Porter's piece on John Scanlon ("The Scanlon Spin," *CJR*, September/October). Years ago, when I was press secretary to Mayor Lindsay, Scanlon had a parallel job with the city's economic development administrator, and no one ever served a good cause with more energy and integrity. We've kept in touch over the years, so it won't be easy to mail this letter.

One thing I miss in the piece is any sense of irony that an old liberal like Scanlon has wound up defending cigarette manufacturers,

or any sense of false logic in the notion that p.r. men are the corporate equivalent of defense attorneys, which is nothing less than an ethical absurdity.

But here is my main point. It is really hard to credit a profile about John Scanlon, the "p.r. impresario" (Porter) and "ace media

## EDWARD WARE BARRETT, 1910-1989

Ed Barrett was fierce in his passion for fairness and steadfast in his devotion to good journalism. Those two commitments led him to the top of his profession, and inspired him to found this magazine a quarter century ago.

He was to the printing press born. His father was both editor and publisher of the Birmingham, Alabama, *Age-Herald*, and it was there that Ed learned the trade. In college, he was chairman of *The Daily Princetonian*; before he was thirty he was *Newsweek's* Washington correspondent and national affairs editor.

He was a journalist who dared to be a public servant, too. He rose to high positions in the Office of War Information; after World War II he returned to *Newsweek* as editorial director. Then, in 1950, he became Harry Truman's assistant secretary of state for public affairs; under Barrett's leadership the fledgling Voice of America tripled in size.

As the sixties unfolded, and journalism itself became ever more part of the story, Ed Barrett decided to protect the press by criticizing it. *CJR* was the result — a magazine designed "to assess the performance of journalism . . . and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service . . ." His words.

Three times it was my good fortune to follow Ed into positions of some prominence — first in the higher reaches of *Newsweek*, then as dean of the journalism school, and finally as publisher of his beloved *CJR*.

On October 23, 1989, after a valiant five-year battle following a stroke, Edward Ware Barrett died. He was 79. In the lives and institutions he touched, his fierce passion and steadfast devotion will long endure.

Osborn Elliott

manipulator" (*CJR's* contents page), that makes no mention of Scanlon's campaign on behalf of CBS to discredit, if not destroy, not only the arguments, but also the good name of my friend Renata Adler, who wrote with integrity for *The New Yorker* about CBS News's controversial defense of its flawed documentary *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception*.

Certainly, a mention by *CJR* of the scholarly support and, in my opinion, vindication of Adler's point about wretched excess at CBS might have helped the reader achieve a more balanced appreciation of Scanlon's reputation, which is assayed in your profile only by clients and friends.

Finally, are you sure you want us to believe that media manipulation by p.r. professionals is morally defensible just because it "works" for those who pay for it, and no matter who gets hurt? Wow! Where are you, Janet Malcolm, now that we really need you?

**THOMAS B. MORGAN**  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

◆ "The Scanlon Spin" is a puff piece, great for Scanlon's business. Why did Bruce Porter omit the fact that Scanlon was the long-time press agent for a convicted racketeer, Brooklyn longshore union boss Tony Scotti?

Lawyers have a license to represent anyone who pays them. Is the same privilege to be granted uncritically to public relations practitioners?

**I.D. ROBBINS**  
RETIRED PUBLIC AFFAIRS COLUMNIST  
DAILY NEWS  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

Bruce Porter replies: *It's hard for me to believe that Mr. Morgan read the piece, other than to scan it for mention of his friend Renata Adler. A good two-thirds of the article details how Scanlon tries in various ways to manipulate the press and to discredit those reporters he cannot win over to his cause, as he tried to do in Adler's case. I used two examples to illustrate this latter point — one being Scanlon's effort to discredit Morton Mintz during the tobacco trial, the other being his effort to kill the book written by Don Kowet that came out just before the Westmoreland trial. Telling the Adler story would have been merely redundant. The*

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**Richard M. Clurman,**  
former chief of correspondents, Time-Life Publications

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**WRITERS.** The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey has the following positions available: Sr. Writer/Editor—News Service (Sr. Supervising Public Information Assistant). Successful candidate must be a high-energy, productive person who is adept at digging into complex subjects and quickly producing compelling news releases for use by state's health sciences university. Must have minimum 5 years' daily newspaper or magazine experience and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism or Public Relations. Strong interest in and knowledge of medicine and the basic sciences highly desired as is the ability to tighten and sharpen copy under deadline pressure. Familiarity

with word processing is a plus. Send persuasive cover letter (including biographical highlights), résumé, salary history, 5 non-returnable clips, and the names and phone numbers of three professional references. Publications Writer (Principal Public Information Assistant). We seek a feature writer with excellent interviewing skills to develop articles for the University's award winning magazine, newsletters, annual report and other special publications. Clear, concise writing, excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to translate both technical information and issues-oriented material into sound, consumer-oriented copy are essential. Should have journalism degree and minimum of three years' reporting or writing experience. Science or healthcare background a plus. Submit two writing samples. We offer an excellent salary and benefits. Send résumé with items requested above, indicating position of interest to: Dawnn Banks, Dept. of Human Resources, The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, 30 Bergen Street, Newark, NJ 07107-3007. EOE/AA/M/F/H/V.

## MISCELLANEOUS

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piece, incidentally, said nothing about any of this being "morally defensible." As for Messrs. Morgan's and Robbins's complaint that p.r. people cannot be equated with defense lawyers, that analogy was made not by me but by Josh Friedman, former head of the Committee to Protect Journalists — and I still think it's apt.

◆ I liked Bruce Porter's piece very much. More importantly, it's a public service, truly, because it alerts people — who need to be alerted — to the nature of the beast.

**MORTON MINTZ**  
CHEVY CHASE, MD.

## MARCH ON, REPORTERS!

◆ Reporters have rights, too, just like everyone else. Stephanie Saul's review of the ruckus over participation by reporters in demonstrations involving political issues such as abortion ("Do Reporters Have a Right to March?" CJR, July/August) unaccountably failed to note the strong position taken by The Newspaper Guild in support of journalists' First Amendment rights.

A resolution by the Guild's International Executive Board in April, subsequently adopted at the Guild's annual convention in June, condemned the attempts by some newspapers to curtail those rights for their employees. It called on all Guild locals "vigorously to defend those rights to demonstrate, to petition for redress, and to speak freely, just as strongly as they defend the rights of the press."

Needless to say, we are as ardent in defending the rights of reporters whose convictions lead them to participate in anti-abortion, or pro-life, activities protected by the First Amendment as we are in safeguarding the rights of those on the other side. Nor is our position on this limited to the abortion issue.

It is basically a reaffirmation of the common sense idea that a journalist's copy is the relevant basis for any judgment about his or her performance and integrity, period. We also happen to think that a reporter who is a committed citizen is more likely to be a good reporter.

**CHARLES DALE**  
PRESIDENT  
THE NEWSPAPER GUILD  
SILVER SPRING, MD.

## TO SWAT A GADFLY

◆ As a former journalist who committed the unforgivable sin of leaving the press corps to work in public relations, I read with some amusement the piece by Julie Horowitz on the new left college papers ("College Papers: New Life on the Left," CJR, Septem-



ber/October), particularly the section on the *Gadfly* here at the University of Vermont.

For anyone associated with the *Gadfly* to claim that it revealed salaries of university administrators is absurd. UVM administrative salaries are, and have been, public information and are available to anyone who asks. This year a member of the state legislature asked for administrative salary data during the university's budget hearing, and it was provided to him and all reporters present at the committee hearing that same day. The university scooped the *Gadfly* by nearly a month. Some revelation.

That some members of the *Gadfly* staff claim "at least some credit" for UVM President Lattie F. Coor's decision to leave UVM and head west to the University of Arizona is an interesting observation. However, someone should tell the *Gadfly* that Coor isn't going to the University of Arizona. He's going to Arizona State.

**NICK MARRO**

DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
BURLINGTON, VT.

Julie Horowitz replies: *While the university may have made the information about administrative salaries available to reporters, local newspapers did not pick up on the salaries story until Gadfly published its piece, according to Peter Brodie, a Gadfly staff member. To test the notion that UVM administrative salaries are public information, Brodie adds, he recently asked for them, and was turned down. As for Mr. Marro's second point, regarding where Mr. Coor went after leaving Burlington, I regret the error.*

**CJR'S ACCOUNTING ERROR**

◆ I was dismayed and embarrassed to read in "Money, Money, Money" (CJR, September/October) that editorial writers at *The Press Democrat* in Santa Rosa, California, earn \$22,000 per year salary. The fact is that editorial writers with five years experience will earn a salary in 1989 of \$39,972.

Mary Fricker, the person you listed as an editorial writer, is a part-time employee in the editorial department, not an editorial writer.

**LYNN O. MATTHEWS**  
PUBLISHER  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT  
SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

**DEADLINE**

The editors welcome letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the January/February issue, letters should be received by November 17. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.



## YALE LAW SCHOOL Fellowships in Law for Journalists

*"Coming to Yale Law School is like reading the book after watching the movie: the subtle details and meanings become clear. As a journalist, I found the experience invaluable."*

—Amy Singer, MSL '89  
American Lawyer

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Applications must be submitted by January 15, 1990. For further information, please write to Fellowships in Law for Journalists, Yale Law School, 401A Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut 06520.

## FELLOWSHIPS IN GERMANY

Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism is again seeking applicants for travel fellowships for American journalists.

The John J. McCloy Fellowships, sponsored by the American Council on Germany, offer programs for American journalists wishing to study and write about West Germany. They cover expenses for a three-week trip at any time during the year. Deadline, February 1, 1990.

Applications are available from:

Prof. Donald Shanor  
Graduate School of  
Journalism  
Columbia University  
New York, N.Y. 10027

### The Second Annual John Bartlow Martin Award for Public Service Magazine Journalism

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**For information and entry blanks:** Carol Ryzak, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, 1845 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois 60208, (312) 491-5661 Fax#(312) 491-3956. **Area code changes to (708) on 11/11/89.**

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# The Lower case



## Bell admits abuses were widespread

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* 9/14/89

**MARCH ON CITY HALL:** About 1,500 blacks stage a double-barrel protest concerning drainage and treatment of three council members.

*The Miami Herald* 10/3/89

## Frozen Embryos Ruled Children

*Daily News-Record* (Harrisonburg, Va.) 9/22/89

**COLD SPRING, N.Y.** — A typographical error in the obituary of Jack Kelly, Jr., printed in the July 7, 1989, issue of *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* listed Mr Kelly as a communist activist. He was, in fact, a long-time community activist

*Antiques and The Arts Weekly* (Newtown, Conn.) 7/14/89

**The Reverend Harry Phillips of Atlanta sodomized the 5:30 p.m. rites.**

*The Belton (S.C.) News* 7/19/89

Asked what Liz gave him for his birthday, the divorced Forbes said, "I am not telling, as a matter of fact." But then he paused for a second and added: "One of the things she gave me was Elizabeth Taylor's passion for me."

*Los Angeles Times* 8/21/89

## For the Record

**Malcolm Forbes**—A story in Monday's *Times* about publisher Malcolm Forbes' birthday party in Tangier contained a typographical error in a quote in which he described a present he received from actress Elizabeth Taylor. The correct quote is: "One of the things she gave me was Elizabeth Taylor's Passion for Men," a reference to a perfume that bears the actress' name.

*Los Angeles Times* 8/22/89

## Downpour blamed on car hitting pedestrians

*Sunday Herald-Times* (Bloomington, Ind.) 9/10/89



LARRY GOMEZ  
Neutering needed

*Casper (Wyo.) Star-Tribune* 9/24/89

## Diplomat suspected of spying to write book

*Pacific Daily News* (Agana, Guam) 9/15/89

## Miniature Lovers Gathering in City

*The Daily Oklahoman/Times* 9/29/89

## Eating problems rise on campuses

*The Badger Herald* (Madison, Wis.) 9/20/89



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